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- 845. United Counties. Bedford / Northampton. UK. Buses. Oct 2000. 60 minutes by Dave Spencer. Fleet numbers announced, starts at Bedford bus station and through town centre then on to Northampton for First Northampton and more United Counties.
- 844. London. UK. Buses. Oct 2000. 60 minutes by Dave Spencer, fleet numbers announced to assist with identification. Starts with Romford, Essex then on to Stratford. Light rain at first then downpour by the time we reach Stratford. Stagecoach East London, First Capital etc
- 843. Colchester. UK. Buses. Sept 2000. 60 minutes filmed by Dave Spencer, a wonderful bright mild autumn day, the sun hindered town centre scenes but spot on for the bus station with Eastern National, Arriva Colchester and independents such as Heddingham.
- 842. Ipswich. UK. Buses. Sept 2000. 60 minutes by Dave Spencer, features the farewell to Atlanteans running day plus our usual coverage of the municipal fleet and Eastern Counties. Both bus station and street scenes. Fleet numbers announced.
- 841. Showbus 2000. September 2000. UK. Buses. The second part of our coverage, with over 400 buses old and new, taking on the arrivals mid morning onwards, in blustery weather, the sun ideally placed, a look around the showground before the heavens opened.
- 840. Showbus 2000. September 2000. UK. Buses. The annual EFE Showbus at the Imperial War Museum Duxford in Cambridgeshire with vehicles arriving from the early morning onwards in brilliant sunshine, but we knew it wouldn't last, ideal for those who missed the early sun.
- 839. Yorkshire. UK. Buses. September 2000. 60 minutes by Dave Spencer with a visit to Huddersfield, lots of Atlanteans still around, then Halifax including Halifax Joint Committee and then Bradford, amazing scenes, flooded with 88 new buses, B7TL deckers down to Solos plus articulated BLAs, fleet numbers announced to aid identification.
- 838. Merseyside. UK. Buses. September 2000. 60 minutes by Dave Spencer. Rather blustery weather, take in the 'fuel' crisis, a local trip from the PMP base to update Merseyside coverage since Arriva take-over, visiting Liverpool and Birkenhead. Atlanteans soldier on!
- 837. Derby. UK. Buses. September 2000. 60 minutes by Dave Spencer, fleet numbers announced to aid identification. Bright diffused light ideal for photography updating our regular coverage of Arriva / Trent and other operators working into Derby.
- 828. Lathalmond, Scotland. August 2000. The 2000 annual bus gathering at the Scottish Bus Museum in Fife. The usual friendly meeting of like minded souls which attracts participants from both sides of the border and a mix of vehicles not seen elsewhere.
- 827. Hong Kong 1972-77. Buses. Our first archive feature from the camera of Alan Mortimer. Superb quality scenes which hark back to the glory days of the half cab, giant Regent Vs, ex Southdown Guys and Queen Marys, the sheer variety is staggering.
- 821. Dublin. Ireland. Buses. July 2000. 60 minutes by Dave Spencer with plenty of time to record the almost complete fleet renewal as the last Bombardiers see out their final days, Volvo Olympians galore, commuter express services, inter urban coaches.
- 820. Galway / Dublin. Ireland. Buses. July 2000. 60 minutes by Dave Spencer with a visit to Galway city on a Monday for weekday urban services including minibus competition, open top services and Bedford OB, filler material in Dublin. Lots of new buses noted.

**PMP, 17 BIRCHWOOD DRIVE, LOWER PEOVER, CHESHIRE WA16 9QJ. Tel: 01565 722045 Fax: 01565 722 038 e-mail: [dave@pmpvideo.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:dave@pmpvideo.fsnet.co.uk)**



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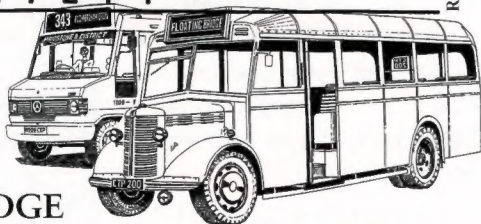
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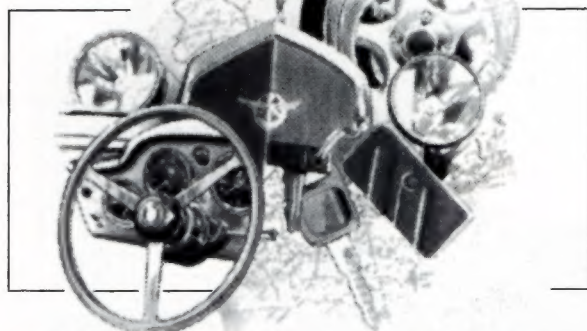
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THE MARKET LEADER



# SHED A TEAR FOR THE MARKETING LUDDITES

In other circumstances, the possible demise of the Great Britain Bus Timetable might matter less. There can't be many ordinary bus users, or even potential bus users who would be prepared to spend £13.50 on a 600-page volume of every known service in the country, even if they wanted to travel more widely than the services on their own doorstep. No more than there are people prepared to stock up with the BT phone books for other parts of Britain when they are only likely to refer to a miniscule percentage of the entries in the book for their town or region.

But there the difference begins to become apparent. If you live in Eltham, Exeter, Easingwold or Ecclefechan and want to find out the number for Mr Eccles in Preston, you pick up the phone and dial directory enquiries. Provided Mr Eccles isn't ex-directory and you know which of the seemingly infinite number of Prestons he lives in, the operator will activate the answer within seconds. On the other hand, where do you go for an answer to such a bus enquiry?

The government hopes we'll all make use of the PTI2000 service and ring one of the regional call centres, perhaps even log in on line from the comfort of our internet-compatible computers. But even where they exist, those call centres haven't yet had much of a chance to settle down and prove their worth. Nor are their numbers as well publicised or as memorable as directory enquiries' 192.

So it seems our best hope remains the GBBT, however imperfect and ultimately impractical a tool it may be. At least if there's one at the local library or travel information office, someone can come up with the required answers.

The GBBT crisis is more worrying, however, for another reason. It throws up an apparent lack of appreciation of the sheer necessity of information provision in some parts of the bus industry. An under-appreciation of the value of the simplest investment in advertising.

As others have pointed out recently, it's surely no coincidence that award-winning Arriva the Shires & Essex's successful generation of 1.5% extra business in one of the less promising parts of the country has been achieved with the biggest marketing budget in Arriva. Probably also with one of the biggest marketing budgets in the whole bus industry if we were to delve deeply enough.

For the converse of that is the roll call of the unhelpful which is spelt out by Peter White in the latest, and maybe last GBBT. The two FirstGroup, one Arriva and one Stagecoach company which have consistently failed to supply information to the timetable — and the one PTE and two county councils which apparently have matched these poor standards — aren't just letting down the editors and publishers of a low circulation, 600-page timetable. They're sending out a signal on behalf of those who see publicity as a cost and a nuisance, not as an investment in future potential growth.

There is a view in this industry which has spent at least 50 years perfecting its skills in cost control and decline management — skills for which it is to be admired — that publicity is an unnecessary luxury that should be left for other agencies to provide, if it's needed at all. It shouldn't be, though. It's an essential part

of the lifeblood of any thriving industry. How else do the middle class residents of the semi-detached estates even begin to realise there might be a bus alternative open to them?

They won't likely want to buy a GBBT or anything like it, but if major players consider it unimportant, what confidence can we have that they will be any more supportive of PTI2000 or that they will seize the initiative to distribute, unprompted, information on services in the localities they serve?

Weep not so much for the possible loss of GBBT, but weep copiously for the message its loss sends out.



ALAN MILLAR



Arriva Cymru is one of the operators criticised by the Great Britain Bus Timetable. Here, one of its Plaxton-bodied Dennis Darts passes Conwy Castle.  
CHRIS MORRISON

## EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

All articles, letters, press releases and colour photographs (we prefer to use transparencies where possible) should be sent to the Editor at: Buses, PO Box 3759, Glasgow, G41 5YN

Please send a stamped addressed envelope if you wish to have your photographs returned after use.

Fleet news reports (but not photographs) should be sent to the appropriate correspondents whose addresses are listed in the Fleet News sections.



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A cracker of a Metrobus  
PHILIP LAMB

Cover picture

Arriva Colchester's fleet includes this Volvo  
B10M with Plaxton Derwent II body, new  
to Buffalo of Flitwick.  
GEOFF MILLS



# CURRENT ISSUES

## around the industry

### BIG GROUPS THREATEN TO PULL THE PLUG ON GREAT BRITAIN BUS TIMETABLE

The long-term future of Southern Vectis's Great Britain Bus Timetable has been plunged into doubt by two of the largest public transport groups' decision to withdraw funding for its continued publication, although they appear willing to underwrite the maintenance of its unique database.

When the 17th edition of the timetable was published in November, covering bus services up to 11 June 2001, Southern Vectis managing director Stuart Linn warned that this could well be the last. In the absence of regular government funding, the GBBT has been kept going by contributions from Arriva, Blazefield, FirstGroup, Go-Ahead, National Express and Stagecoach, but two of the groups — Stagecoach and FirstGroup — had withdrawn their combined funding on the grounds that the government-backed PTI2000 telephone help line and internet-based service would take its place.

In an outspoken introduction to the latest timetable which costs around £200,000 a year to produce, Stuart Linn says: 'The book has become the reference work for bus services outside the major urban areas, and the resultant database now has many uses beyond that originally envisaged. The financial support from the industry has been critical to the success of the project, both the maintenance of the national database and also the production and distribution of the book to bus offices, rail stations, tourist information centres and libraries.'

He appears to have persuaded the groups to come up with some funding after threatening that the loss of the 600-page book would also threaten to destroy Southern Vectis's Xephos electronic database of bus travel information, a system which he argues is 'the only impartial national bus website' and 'one of the few software systems that has been demonstrated to be able to cope with the complexities of the UK public transport market'.

The loss of Xephos, he says, would cut off the source of public transport information used, for example, in National Trust, English Heritage and Youth Hostels Association yearbooks.

While the major groups remain sceptical about the value of the printed timetables, they may agree to

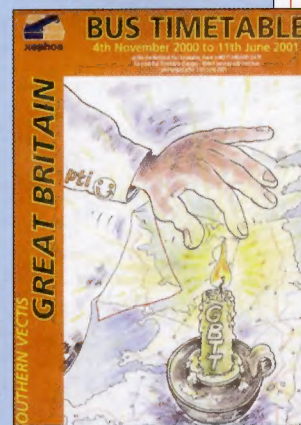
fund the maintenance of the Xephos database which should make it possible for its on-line timetable service to be extended to cover the whole country by March.

Although the groups' funding cuts have brought the issue to a head, it appears that the bigger focus of Southern Vectis's annoyance lies within the Department of the Environment, Transport & the Regions (DETR) which is pinning its faith in the immediate success of the still unproved and nationally incomplete PTI2000 initiative and which refuses to fund continuing commercial projects like the GBBT.

Nevertheless GBBT editor Peter White has also used the latest edition of the timetable to take a sideswipe at operators within and beyond the two 'guilty' groups and at local authority organisations which he says have failed to co-operate in maintaining the database.

'First Cymru has gone from being a loyal supporter to the opposite; no information from Swansea since May. First Glasgow and its colleagues at Strathclyde Passenger Transport continue in their inability to send us anything useful; fortunately a colleague visited the area and collected 150 assorted leaflets,' he says. 'Arriva Cymru and Stagecoach East Midlands maintain their standards of never sending us a single leaflet, let alone a registration. Some local authorities like Denbigh and North Yorkshire might as well not exist.'

The hard-hitting messages within what may be the last printed Great Britain Bus Timetable are reinforced by a cover illustration showing a GBBT candle being snuffed out by PTI2000.



### VECTIS TO DEMERGE BUSES

Southern Vectis has confirmed that it is going to demerge its bus operating and consultancy businesses from Conder Environmental, its oil spill and environmental services division.

In the year to April 2000, pretax

bus profits of £950,000 were reduced to £580,000 by losses at Conder which has since acquired Fibre Reinforced Products, a rival manufacturer of storage tanks and electrical insulation materials with factories in Peterlee, Co Durham.



Southern Vectis has been carrying modest additional numbers of passengers on its bus routes on the Isle of Wight and at its Southampton-based Solent Blue Line business which operates East Lancs-bodied Volvo Olympian 736 (M736 BBP).  
ALAN MILLAR

## A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

to all our readers and advertisers from everyone on the Buses team. We greatly appreciate your enthusiastic support and look forward to serving and entertaining you throughout 2001.

**BUSES**



# IS THIS THE NEW DRESS FOR BARBIE'S AUNTIES?

Three years after launching the 'Barbie' pastel livery for all its 1997 and newer buses other than Mercedes-Benz Vario minibuses, FirstGroup appears poised to follow Stagecoach and Arriva by abandoning local liveries for its fleets outside London.

Two First Mainline buses at Rotherham have appeared in experimental versions of a national FirstGroup livery expected to be used for older buses in the regional fleets. The Volvo B10M/Alexander PS single-decker and a long wheelbase Dennis Dominator/Alexander RH have been refurbished in 'Barbie' blue and magenta on a base colour described as being more grey than the off-white used on the newer buses.

They have blue skirts and a magenta-edged blue roof from the first window bay to the back. The Dominator has a solid magenta front dash panel from below the windscreen to the skirt, while the B10M has a faded effect magenta band which merges upwards into the grey and also has solid magenta

doors. The B10M has been shown to other FirstGroup companies.

This move to consider a corporate livery for older vehicles follows the introduction of a green/yellow/white livery by First Leicester during 2000, after an unpopular experimental dark blue and red style was abandoned, and First Edinburgh's adoption of a green/yellow/blue and cream livery in 'Barbie' style towards the end of 1999.

There also has been some local criticism of First Huddersfield's dark green, while it looks as if neighbouring First Bradford may have been overtaken in its efforts to introduce a new style to replace the two-tone blue used since the company was formed in 1995. One Volvo Olympian has appeared in a blue/orange/cream livery reminiscent of Strathguy's colours, but plans to paint a further two buses in similar colours have been shelved pending the outcome of deliberations on a group-wide colour scheme.



Above:  
The experimental 'B fleet' livery on First Mainline Volvo B10M 708 (K708 EDT).  
pictures by ANDREW JAROSZ

Left:  
The plainer style applied to Mainline Dennis Dominator 2476 (D476 OWE). Both liveries have been tweaked since they were first applied.

Below left:  
One of a kind?: First Bradford Volvo Olympian/Northern Counties 5604 (L604 PWR) wears the seventh version of Bradford livery in five years.

# GOVT FIGURES CONFIRM NORTH/SOUTH DIVIDE

Government statistics confirm Stagecoach chairman Brian Souter's view that bus patronage is declining in northern Britain and rising in London and the south-east where the population and traffic congestion are growing.

While transport minister Lord (Gus) Macdonald says the 1% increase in passenger numbers across Great Britain 'really does indicate a revival in public transport and shows we are on course to meet our target for a 10% increase in bus patronage by 2010', the effect is extremely patchy.

There were 2% increases in London (reversing a marginal decrease in 1998/99) and eastern England (up on a 1% rise in 1998/99), while numbers were up by 3% (1998/99: 6%) in south-east England outside London; against

that, however, there was a 4% decline in north-west England and a 2% fall in Yorkshire and Humberside.

Over the five years since 1994/95, the government says bus patronage has remained broadly level at 4.3 billion journeys, with falls in northern regions counterbalanced by rises of 12% in London, 9% in south-east England outside the UK capital and 2% in eastern England.

These trends help explain, or perhaps are partly explained by Arriva the Shires & Essex's success in being voted Bus Operator of the Year in the 2000 Bus Industry Awards. Its marketing effort — by spending 1% of turnover on this area, it has the highest marketing budget of any Arriva subsidiary — helped it boost patronage in 1999/2000 by 1.5%.

# Ensignbus associate buys London Pride Sightseeing

Although Ensignbus issued a statement 10 months ago saying it had no interest in re-acquiring London Pride Sightseeing, sister company City Sightseeing has taken over the Rainham, Essex-based business, its fleet of around 110 double-deckers (90 of them active in the winter) and 160 staff.

When City Sightseeing was formed as a global brand for marketing partnerships and wholly-owned open-top bus tours, it made no secret of its plans to launch in London either as a new start business or by acquiring one of the existing players. London Pride — which Ensignbus sold in 1998 — is to be relaunched as City

Sightseeing London and director Ross Newman promises that the financially troubled business will be turned round.

'We will be very aggressive and defend our territory,' he says. 'We aim to make a profit and will live it up to what it used to be.' City Sightseeing logos have begun to appear on the fleet pending a full repainting programme. It is possible that some of the route numbers used by London Pride will be replaced by naming the company's different tours.



London Pride livery, as worn by ex-Eastbourne partially open-top Dennis Dominator/East Lancs 242 (FDY 142X), is to disappear. So might the route numbers which clash with London bus routes.  
ALAN MILLAR

# BUS PEOPLE

**John Pope**, who resigned recently as Nottingham City Transport's managing director, is taking on one of the new commercial director roles in Stagecoach — in his case with Stagecoach East Midlands whose territory includes the former municipal operations in Chesterfield, Grimsby-Cleethorpes and Hull.

West Bromwich East Labour MP **Peter Snape** is standing down as chairman of Travel West Midlands and is leaving the board of the National Express Group subsidiary.

Following its success in winning the South Central rail franchise, Go-Ahead Group has redesignated managing director **Martin Ballinger** and commercial director **Chris Moyes** as chief executive and deputy chief executive respectively, while Thameslink/Thames Trains managing director **Keith Ludeman** (former managing director of its London bus operations) becomes chief executive, rail.



## MIXED FORTUNES FOR GUIDED BUSES AS EDINBURGH FACES UP TO THE POSSIBILITY OF A DEAD CERT

Edinburgh's £50 million guided bus link between the city centre and airport might be severely delayed or scrapped, but work has begun on Bradford's more modest project and Stagecoach is optimistic that its ambitious Northampton system could start running before the end of 2002.

City of Edinburgh Rapid Transit (CERT) — being developed as a private finance initiative (PFI) project by the ConCERT consortium of FirstGroup, Edison and Abbey National — hoped to begin building the link in January, but the most optimistic start date now is June and even that is in question. Mid-2003 is the earliest prediction for when the buses could start running.

It's reported that the project has been delayed partly by objections from residents in the Saughtonhall area of the city who oppose a route change which would place the CERT track behind their back gardens, and also by a property developer which appears to be seeking building consent in exchange for releasing land. CERT also has fallen foul of a human rights challenge to Edinburgh Council's plans for rural developments in the west side of the city, while further complications have arisen through the addition of plans to connect the system to Heriot Watt University and the new town of Livingston. The original plan was for one intermediate stop at the Edinburgh Park business complex.

Pressure is also growing for the busway to be replaced by either a tram network or for a heavy rail link to be put into the airport but those options would be much more expensive.

There is better news for FirstGroup in Bradford where work has begun on a £7 million quality bus initiative in the city which will include 2km of central guided busways — two inbound sections and one outbound — along sections of Huddersfield Road and Manchester Road.

This work includes the removal of two pedestrian footbridges and two subways which divided the communities at this section of the route, and their replacement with traffic light-controlled pelican crossings. The guideways are to come into operation between May and autumn 2001.

Stagecoach, meanwhile, is optimistic

that the Northampton guided bus system being promoted by Stagecoach-RTI, the group's joint venture with Rapid Transit International, could be carrying its first passengers by the end of 2002.

This is later than originally anticipated (*Buses* January 2000), as the project was delayed for much of the year by a legal dispute following the council's decision to grant planning permission to a developer without seeking financial contributions towards the busway. That matter has since been resolved and Stagecoach's UK Bus chief executive Brian Cox says the project appears to be back on track.

It looks like RTI's plans for futuristic gas buses have been shelved for the Northampton project for the time being. 'Northampton will come first with just a decent environmentally friendly diesel bus with nice branding and more frilly bits,' he says.

But Stagecoach-RTI is pursuing more ambitious plans for technologically advanced guided buses in Cambridge. 'There's no reason why Cambridge couldn't be far behind Northampton in getting started and we would like to see it happen,' says Brian Cox. 'For Cambridge, we believe it needs new technology and we're looking to how we can bring that at a deliverable cost. That could delay the project.'



Left:

Bradford Mayor Stanley King — a well-known historian of the city's public transport and especially its trolleybuses — helps inaugurate work on the guided busway. He was accompanied by FirstGroup directors Andy Campbell and Ian Davies and (on the left of the group) a representative of building contractor Alfred McAlpine Construction.

Far left:

Plans for futuristic gas buses in Northampton appear to have been replaced by something that's 'diesel and frilly', but Stagecoach-RTI still hopes to use more exciting technology in Cambridge.



## ALPHA'S BACK IN HULL

Alpha Coaches restarted commercial bus services in Hull on 7 November, almost eight years after selling what then was a four-bus operation to East Yorkshire, reports DAVID LONGBOTTOM.

This time, it is competing with Stagecoach Kingston upon Hull on services 1 and 2 to Boothferry Estate, to the west of the city. Alpha's two quarter hourly services follow a similar, but not identical route to Stagecoach's and operate between 07.30 and 18.00 on Mondays to Saturdays with reduced frequencies at school times.

Alpha, which also runs coaches and tendered services, is operating the new services with four recently acquired ex-London Leyland Titans,

some Renault/Northern Counties mobility midibuses, two Mercedes-Benz Varios and ex-Nottingham Leyland Atlanteans from its school bus fleet.



Alpha, Hull A985 SYE, a former London Central Leyland Titan used on its daytime services.  
DAVID LONGBOTTOM

## STANSTED AIRBUS TO BE BOUND BY COMPETITION CONDITIONS

Trade & industry secretary Stephen Byers is setting conditions to prevent the National Express Group from exploiting its monopoly of coach and rail links between central London and Stansted Airport.

The price of government approval for NatEx's acquisition of Prism Rail, whose West Anglia Great Northern franchise operates the Stansted Express train service, is that the group's coach services to the airport — primarily the recently introduced Airbus service from Victoria — should be retained at least at their present frequencies, hours of operation and seating capacity and that fares should be no higher than for the group's services between central London and Heathrow.

He wants NatEx to be required to give 45 days' notice to the Office of Fair Trading of any reductions to existing levels and for it to give at least three months' notice if it intends to cease running to Heathrow.

NatEx would be permitted to reduce capacity if another operator comes on to the Stansted route, but would be banned from running journeys fewer than 10 minutes ahead of the competitor's coaches.





# DON'T FORGET YOUR 2001 RALLY CALENDAR DETAILS

This is a final reminder to all organisers of rallies, open days, running days and bus museums that we need details of your 2001 events for our annual Rally Calendar & Museum Guide.

As last year, this will be published as a free supplement with March *Buses* in time for the start of the year's rallying season. Please send in details of where

and when events are being held along with contact details to the Editor, *Buses*, PO Box 3759, Glasgow, G41 5YN (or fax details to 0141 427 9594) to arrive no later than Friday 5 January. There is no charge for entries, but if you wish to advertise the event, please contact our advertising sales manager, Tony Ferrary, at the address shown on this month's contents page.

## DIARY DATES

### 9 January

Institute of Logistics & Transport (Northants, Leicester & Trent Section). Steve Whiteway, operations director, Epsom Coaches on Recruiting and Retaining Staff. 18.00, Kegworth Hotel, near M1 Junction 24, Leicestershire.

### 13 January

Omnibus Society (Scottish Branch). 2000 Slide Show. 17.30, Room 2, Riddles Court, 322 Lawnmarket, Edinburgh (Royal Mile).

### 16 January

Institute of Logistics & Transport (Northern Home Counties Section). Mark Fowles on Nottingham Express Transit scheme. 18.30, Institute of Arable Crop Research, Rothamsted, Harpenden.

### 24 January

London Transport Museum. Lecture, The Power of Design by David Worthington, Conran Design Group. 18.30-20.30, LT Museum, Covent Garden, London, WC2. Tickets £6 (£4 Friends/concessions). Booking advisable, phone 020 7379 6344.

### 30 January

Omnibus Society (national meeting). Presidential address by Moir Lockhead, chief executive, FirstGroup. 18.45, London Underground headquarters, 55 Broadway, London, SW1 (above St James's Park Underground station).

## BUSES COVER PRICE

Rising costs — not least of fuel, paper and distribution — have compelled us to increase the cost of *Buses* to £3.10 with this issue, so we can maintain and go on

developing what we hope you still think is your favourite monthly bus magazine. For details of a special subscriptions offer, please turn to page 38.

## Corgi's C5 bus

Corgi tells us that the 1/76th scale Midland Red single-deck bus model being added to its Original Omnibus Company range this year will be the cascaded service bus version of the C5 coach, rather than the S15 bus. Look out for a competition in next month's issue to win a rare resin prototype of the CM5T coach model.

# THE FENTON FILE

MIKE FENTON describes the most atypical Leyland Lynxes operated in the UK — the only ones with Alexander bodywork

The former independent Stevenson's of Uttoxeter is a good example of a company with a penchant for collecting unusual vehicles. You may recall the prototype Leyland Olympian featured in November 1999 *Buses*. The tradition was continued by a batch of seven Alexander (Belfast)-bodied Leyland Lynxes acquired by the company from Citybus, Belfast in the winter of 1992. Three had Leyland TL11 engines, three had Gardner 6HLXBs and one had a 6HLXCT.

The Lynx was the successor to the Leyland National and, like that model, it was manufactured at the Lillyhall plant in Workington. Unlike the National, it possessed an underframe so, in theory, manufacturers other than Leyland could build bodywork for the model. As things turned out, those for Citybus were destined to be the only home market Lynxes with non-Leyland bodies; there was a locally-bodied version for Australia and, strangely, the Ulster vehicles — with N-type bodies — were the first Lynxes to be completed.

It was considered as a possible successor to the Bristol RE in Northern Ireland, but both Citybus and Ulsterbus concentrated on purchasing underfloor-engined Leyland Tigers, with more than 100 going to Citybus alone. This served only to highlight the non-standard nature of the model in a highly standardised fleet, so it came as no

surprise when the entire batch was sold after fewer than six years' service.

Stevenson's seemingly regarded them as a bargain and soon put the batch to work on services around Burton, as demonstrated by 259 (HXI 3009) seen in the small Leicestershire market town of Ashby-de-la-Zouch in June 1992. Under Arriva ownership, at least four were withdrawn during 2000, two of the TL11-powered examples returning nearer their original home to join the Anchor Tours fleet at Dundalk in the Irish Republic.





## ARRIVA BUYS INTO PORTUGAL WITH £5M TAKEOVER DEALS

Arriva, the only UK-based group with substantial operations in continental Europe, has expanded its presence in the Iberian peninsula by paying £5 million for three northern Portuguese operators.

The purchase of Ami-Transportes, Joao Carlos Soares & Pilhos and Viaco Costa Lino adds 180 buses and 340 employees to the 250-vehicle Arriva Noroeste business across the border in the adjacent Spanish region of Galicia. These three companies provide interurban services from principal depots in Braga and Guimares and may be

added to soon if agreement goes ahead to purchase another bus company in Famalicao.

Commenting on the deal, Arriva chief executive Bob Davies said: 'The Portuguese market provides good growth opportunities,' adding, 'There will be scope to integrate these new interurban services and consolidate operations.'

These acquisitions take the Arriva fleet up to around 10,200 vehicles, of which around 2,900 are in Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands, Spain and now Portugal.



## New York Apple upgrades with Willowbrook VRs

New York Apple Tours, the double-deck sightseeing operator threatened with closure by court proceedings following a fatal accident involving a pedestrian ('Global News' September), has had a clean sweep of its fleet by replacing some of its more battered ex-UK double-deckers.

All of its former London Transport DMS-class Fleetlines and MCW Metroliner motorway coaches have been replaced by six Willowbrook-bodied Bristol VRTs. These 1977 buses were first operated by East Kent and are older than at least the Metroliners; they came from Arriva's Original London Sightseeing Tour.

Three of the VRs have entered service, but use of the other three

has been threatened by the New York authorities' view that their 'green' Gardner engines have insufficiently low emissions.

A notice in the company's window shows a mocked up photograph of a Kowloon Motor Bus Dennis Trident with Alexander ALX400 body and claims that 36 of these are on order for 2001; if so, this would greatly alter a fleet made up entirely of elderly VRs and a few Neoplan Skyliners.

Below:

New York Apple Tours 173 (BX 3465, TFN 988T), one of the company's first three Willowbrook-bodied Bristol VRTs, in service in October.

NIGEL EADON-CLARKE



Recent low-floor double-deck deliveries to Hong Kong operators include the first of 90 German-built Neoplan Centroliners for New World First Bus (top) and Berkhof-bodied MANs for Kowloon Motor Bus. The Centroliner is seen entering Wanchai Ferry bus station on Hong Kong Island, the MAN is outside Jordan Road bus station in Kowloon.

GEOFF O'BRIEN



## FRENCH SMARTCARD SYSTEMS WILL BE READY FOR THE EURO

The main bus operators in the French cities of Grenoble and Angoulême are investing in ERG smartcard automated fare collection systems which will be ready in time for France's conversion to the euro currency in January 2002.

Semitag, part of the Transdev group which owns London United and a stake in Nottingham City Transport, is installing magnetic stripe and contactless smartcard validators on each of the 300 buses and trams used on Grenoble's four bus and two tram lines.

STGA, the operator serving Greater Angoulême with 120 buses, is installing a similar scheme which it hopes to have in place early in 2001.



## COMPETITIVE TENDERING MOOTED AS RUSSIAN UNDERFUNDING THREATENS BUS SAFETY

A decade of underfunding has caused Russia's public transport services to degrade so much that the situation is beginning to pose a threat to passenger safety, senior transport officials say. '80% of bus transport, which is the only form of transport in most Russian towns and cities, went out of date during the 1990s,' says Anatoly Pinson, head of the Federal Transport Ministry's automobile department.

He says the situation is unlikely to improve in the near future because most regional transport companies don't have enough money to maintain their bus fleets. Although he could not estimate the total funding needed to maintain buses, he says the government must step in to meet the shortfall.

Transport Ministry officials admit that 80% of buses fail to meet basic safety standards, with

problems most commonly involving brakes, tyres, driveshafts, chassis and engines. The ministry does not keep statistics of traffic accidents involving defective buses.

Russia has 505,000 buses, 20,000 of which are owned by private companies. Pinson says the growth in passenger transport volume — with more than 15.2 billion passengers using public services for the first nine months of 2000, including 500 million using private bus routes — is another example of why public transport is in trouble.

He says regional transport companies have only met demand because of private sector involvement in public transport, which began in earnest in 1997 and has taken the load off some municipal services. The Transport Ministry intends to encourage more private operators. 'We are

planning to create real competition among companies that would be able to win tenders for serving different routes,' he says.

Despite the lack of money to date, deputy transport minister Mikhail Kozlov claims that public transport could be brought up to scratch in the next few years; in 1999, just 30% of operations turned a profit — up 10%. He does not say how those public transport companies improved their situation.

'The thing is that municipal buses have to serve too many categories of people, for instance, an armada of military personnel, policemen, public prosecutor employees and others travel for free, but transport companies are compensated only 50% of the cost of providing the free service.' The Finance Ministry has promised to raise this to 60% in 2001.

## AUSTRALIAN MERGER CREATES 180-VEHICLE FLEET

A long-drawn-out takeover deal in Australia looked set to be completed in November, with 130-vehicle McCafferty's taking over loss-making 80-vehicle Greyhound Pioneer Australia.

*Truck & Bus* magazine reports that 300 of the 1,300 jobs in the combined business were to be shed along with around 30 coaches and half of their 30 terminals around Australia. McCafferty plans to resume freight deliveries on Greyhound Pioneer routes, although the opportunities for this may be limited by the fleet of 13.5m coaches inherited from Greyhound; McCafferty operates 14.5m coaches.

## US CITY WANTS TO AXE ITS BUSES

Buses Worldwide reports that the City of Poughkeepsie in New York State is considering withdrawing its entire bus system operated by eight large and one mid-sized bus.

The city says this is because of the cost of subsidising the network, but relief may be at hand as the Dutchess County Division of Mass Transportation which shares the city depot has offered to take over. Its fleet of 14 buses and 38 minibuses is operated under contract by Progressive Transportation Services, part of Stagecoach's Coach USA division.

## SPARTAN TO AXE CARPENTER?

United States manufacturer Spartan — the company that supplied two buses to Yorkshire Traction — says it will close its Carpenter school bus division unless a buyer can be found. Reports say production has plunged from 12 buses a day to four.



An elaborately-decorated Mercedes-Benz Q302 in the coach terminal at the Iranian city of Isfahan. Many of the destinations displayed on these vehicles are more of a status symbol for their co-operative owners than any advertised service. MIKE WILSON

## MOSCOW PLAN HITS ELECTRIC STORM

A plan to transport people along Tverskaya Ulitsa in central Moscow on electrically powered buses seems to have suffered a short-circuit before it had a chance to get started.

Comtrans, a private company, recently presented its first \$120,000 Kornet 25-passenger electrobus to the city of Moscow, part of a plan to cut down on the Russian capital's pollution.

Two more of the buses have been ordered, but the city has not yet paid for the subsequent vehicles, nor

for operation of the first vehicle itself. The initial idea was to have all three electrobuses operating in a test run by 2 September, but city officials hope to get funding in 2001 if city tax receipts are sufficient.

However, although some argue that these buses would be more flexible than trolleybuses, others claim that they are too expensive to purchase and that technical limitations would prevent their widespread use.



Russian-built Uritsky trolleybuses are operated in Athens (left) where pre-2004 Olympic Games investment has also seen the introduction of low-floor Neoplan trolleys. BRIAN MORRISON





# IN NEWS AND VIEWS FROM AROUND THE CAPITAL JOHN ALDRIDGE

# LONDON

## TfL STARTS PUTTING FARES IN FOCUS

Since Transport for London came into being we have heard plenty of ideas, thoughts and wishes on future fares policy. So far, the most dramatic change has been the extension of availability of one-day travel tickets — whether Travelcards or LT Cards or Bus Passes — to cover night buses. The tickets are now valid up to 04.30 the following morning. In addition, Weekend Travelcards now cover both days and also go on up to 04.30 on the Monday.

If nothing else, this should speed boarding and give faster journey times on night buses, where previously every passenger had to buy a ticket from the driver. However, there must be quite a revenue loss in all this, and I wonder whether it might not have been better to keep the previous fares policy, using the income for other improvements to the bus network.

Yet another innovation has been the introduction of a ticket-on-line service for monthly or annual Travelcards. If you are an internet user you just visit [www.ticket-on-line.co.uk](http://www.ticket-on-line.co.uk) and wait for your Travelcard to drop through the letterbox three days later. This service has been developed by London Underground and internet ticketing company ts.com on

behalf of TfL. It follows the previous launch of the Ticketline phone service in April 1999, since when 25,000 tickets have been sold to 8,000 customers.

Other ticketing innovations are promised soon. London Buses chair Dave Wetzel talks of introducing carnets that can be torn off and also of programming smartcards so that there is a discount on every journey after the first on the same day. Great, but I hope the ideas don't die a quick death like two recent innovations. One was the introduction of a carnet giving six rides for the price of five in central London. Introduced only in January 2000, it lasted just a few months before being quietly withdrawn.

I wonder whether that was because of an unwillingness by conductors to cancel any of the six marked cancellation spaces when the tickets were presented. One passenger I know found she could have obtained far more than six rides, and when she asked a conductor why he was not bothering to cancel it, he told her the union had told them not to touch the tickets.

Then there was the experiment in the Orpington area to allow — wait for it — passengers actually

to buy a one-day Bus Pass on the bus, instead of having to pay a bus fare first to get to a shop to buy one. For the privilege of this long overdue arrangement, they had to pay a higher price than at the newsagents selling the passes. Only about 100 passes were sold each week, said TfL when it announced the end of the experiment. That didn't sound a bad total for a poorly publicised experiment that only ran on a few local routes in one area. It sounds to me like an idea somebody wanted to fail.

Another experiment still running but seeming likely to fail is the one providing self-service ticket machines at busy locations in central London. You can buy a 40p child or £1 adult ticket valid for one journey within one hour from them. But two of the last three machines I have tried to use were not working. And there's little or no publicity for them by the bus stops concerned. One of the machines is in Kingsway, by Holborn tube station. On one bus shelter there is indeed publicity for the machine, but it's not the shelter by the machine, but the other one some distance away.

It seems to me that those at the top of TfL or London Buses will have their work cut out to get

some of these new ideas accepted. And not being able to buy a one-day pass on any bus is an absolute nonsense that doesn't apply in Manchester, Birmingham or many other places.



Are Londoners turning their backs on the self-service bus ticket machines, such as this one at King's Cross?

ALAN MILLAR

## Competition on London's fringes

You have to go to the fringes of London to find much in the way of competition. But one noteworthy newcomer is Imperial Bus Company, which is running a new half-hourly Monday to Saturday service between Loughton and Buckhurst Hill stations via Debden, using Metrobuses.

Farther out, Arriva the Shires & Essex's recent sale of Lutonian Buses at the insistence of the Office of Fair Trading has caused quite an outcry. The Luton papers are full of complaints and the local council has also become involved because tickets are no longer inter-available.

Arriva East Herts & Essex, meanwhile, has announced that it is giving up commercially operated services 363 (Tottenham Hale-Waltham Cross-Hammond Street) and 517 (Upshire-Waltham Cross-Oakwood). A statement by London Buses vice-chair Joyce Mamode gives an indication of current policy. For she says their withdrawal would leave substantial parts of north London more than five minutes' walk from a bus service.

To replace them next spring, route 192 (Enfield-Northumberland Park) will be extended to Tottenham Hale station, and the 317 (Waltham Cross-Enfield) will be extended to Oakwood station, while new single-deck service 491 (Waltham Cross-Edmonton Green-Ponders End) is to be introduced.

All that is only to replace the parts inside London. Outside, new Arriva route 251 will run from Hammond Street to Upshire via Waltham Cross. That will be a humbler version of the famous (but now vanished) Wood Green-Southend 251 service, once the province of City Coach and later Eastern National.



Although Imperial's latest route is operated by Metrobuses, the Rainham company's fleet also includes former London Transport MD71 (KJD 271P), a refurbished MCW/Scania Metropolitan previously with Whippet, Fenstanton.

JOHN P. ROBINSON

**BUSES**



## CONNECTION? WHAT CONNECTION?

Another example of how official speak and enthusiasm are not reflected at a lower level must surely be with route 54, which runs between Elmers End station (for trains and Tramlink) and Woolwich, having been cut back from its long-established Croydon terminal to feed into Tramlink.

I remarked in a previous issue on the incredibly long route buses were following to turn round at Elmers End, and another hardship was (and is) that passengers who briefly were able to ride all the way to Croydon now have to pay a 70p bus fare plus a 90p tram fare.

## Countdown's misses

Without doubt the Countdown real time information system is one of the best innovations in recent years in London bus operation. But its extension to the outer areas does not seem quite so happy.

One problem is that it is now at many stops served by several routes, yet it is only in use on some of the routes. However, nowhere by the display or in the bus shelter is there an explanation of which routes it covers. If you are an old lady waiting for a 60 and the display gives details only of the 166 and 466 you might conclude that there aren't any 60s running.

Integration has since taken another step backwards, and the route terminates outside the Tesco supermarket in Elmers End and passengers for Croydon are advised to change earlier, at the point where the 54 passes Beckenham Junction train and Tramlink station.

The new 54 timetable provides better connections there, we are told. But there is another loss, because trams from there run only to Croydon, whereas those from Elmers End serve both Croydon and Wimbledon.

A worse problem seems to be mystery buses which arrive at the stop, but haven't appeared on the screen. Waiting for a 466 in Purley the other week, the next 466 was displayed as 17 minutes away — that, by the way, is on a route with a 12-minute frequency. After seven minutes, another 466 was indicated as due in two minutes. Then it vanished, but that bus never appeared. Next time I was at the stop, there was a bus due in 10 minutes, which got down to eight minutes and then it appeared. Not very impressive or encouraging to the average would-be passenger, is it?

## SHORT HOPS

**Christmas Day** services are likely to follow the same pattern as last year, with London Central and Metrolink the major operators. ICL Coachlines will again be running the 709, though over a slightly different route, but a new addition will be route 755 run by Nostalgiabus between Mitcham or Morden and Trafalgar Square, with some journeys extended to St Paul's.

**Popularity of route 492** (Sidcup-Bluewater) when it ran on August Bank Holiday Monday has encouraged introduction of a Sunday service for the first time.

**Top London driver** at the annual Bus Driver of the Year final in Blackpool was Seewa Singh from Arriva London South's Norwood Garage. He drives on route 68.

**Clipped Wings:** Poor loadings on Saturdays on the H50 (Hayes-Stockley Park-West Drayton), operated by Wings Buses, have led to a decision to withdraw the service then, but start the Monday to Friday service earlier, at 06.30 and run it later, till 20.00.

**Improvements** to route 41 (Archway-Tottenham Hale) include a Monday to Saturday daytime frequency of every five minutes — better than that of many central London routes — and a new half-hourly N41 night service.

**Existing** operators have had their route contracts renewed for another five years in the latest TfL tendering round, with the possibility of a two-year extension for good performance. Stagecoach retains the 26/N26 and 230, Metrolink the 95, 268, H1, H2 and H3, FirstGroup retains London Buses' 105 and First Capital retains the 191.



Metrolink has upgraded the buses used on high profile route 16, by replacing one-year-old Dennis Trident/Alexander ALX400s with forward staircase TAL-class versions. TAL121 (X337 HLL) manoeuvres around Marble Arch. GEOFF RIXON



First Croydon buses is operating this year's Christmas/New Year park & ride services in Bromley using drafted-in Dennis Harts, including First Capital Alexander dash-bodied 471 (L671 RMD). RICHARD CROFT



# MILLAR'S *Tales*

THE EDITOR'S SIDWAYS LOOK AT BUS AND COACH EVENTS



## Whatever happened to...? ...the FirstGroup fuel cell bus

A year ago, news broke about plans by FirstGroup and the company that's now called Wrightbus to co-operate in the development of a British fuel-cell electric bus. Futurbus, as it was called, was to be a petrol-electric prototype expected to begin test track trials around the middle of this new year.

A handful of prototype fuel cell buses — effectively vehicles with a miniature on-board power station generating the energy that otherwise comes out of heavy, low-range batteries — exists in mainland Europe and North America. This is the technology which some believe will replace the internal combustion engine in all road-going vehicles, but at this stage it's desperately expensive.

Futurbus was meant to be Britain's contribution to the effort, although the design would also

incorporate a revolutionary Alstom rear axle designed with Renault for trolleybuses. It seems that the lack of British content, other than the Wright body, will at least delay if not kill off the project altogether. The Treasury is unhappy about committing government funds to a project which might assist companies in other European states.

Wrightbus says it's disappointed by what it sees as a short-sighted approach from government and has been trying to establish if alternative funding can be secured to keep the UK in at the ground floor in developing what might be the next generation of buses. In the meantime, a battery-powered Wright-bodied Dennis Dart — which has been around for some time — is expected to appear imminently in Birkenhead.

## WHITBY'S HIDDEN UTILITY GUY

Perhaps it stalks the streets in the smallest hours of the morning, but David Johnson tells me he was unable to track down the bus shown on Coastal & Country Coaches' leaflet

advertising its open-top tours of Whitby. The drawing shows a fully-fronted utility Guy Arab — something whose frontal embellishments would have been considered utterly superfluous by the wartime Ministry of Supply — but all he could find was UWV 623S, a one-time Southdown convertible open-top Bristol VR. That didn't spoil his enjoyment of the tour and he's equally enthusiastic about rival Durham Travel's service — even though it has nothing older than a mid-1970s Hull Atlantean.



Above:  
Coastal & Country's VR may look the part, but where is that incredible Guy?  
DAVID LONGBOTTOM

## WRITE DIRECT TO MILLAR'S TALES

Please send any stories, photos (prints or slides), cuttings and other information on off-beat bus matters direct to:

Buses  
PO Box 3759, Glasgow, G41 5YN

## A MINIATURE RM? IT HAD TO BE JAPANESE

My thanks to Don Roberts from New Zealand for drawing my attention to what looks like the nippiest Routemaster on the planet.

Don, you may recall, supplied the photograph of the Leyland Lynx-cum-Tiger illustrated in last month's 'Global News' section for which we're still seeking more information. He spotted details of it first in a newspaper's classified advertisement section which revealed you could apparently call it yours for a cool NZ\$17,000. The Auckland-area dealer placing the ad — for it and several Toyota

Coasters — described it as a Nisan [sic] Civilian promotional bus new in 1992.

Our informant, who clearly knows his Nissans from the dealer's Nissans tells me the front end isn't an RM original and says several have been imported to New Zealand from Japan. Perhaps the seats upstairs are just what's needed in Japan to transport guests to those city hotels where people sleep in drawers or even to take contestants to the fabled masochistic Endurance television game shows.

## YOUR CHANCE TO WIN A UNIQUE CORGI MODEL

Come on, you witty inventive *Buses* readers. Here's a chance to demonstrate your powers of humorous creativity by supplying a less-than-serious caption or talk bubble for the photograph below.

We have linked up with Corgi to run this competition throughout 2001, with the prize of a hand-painted Original Omnibus Company model bus or coach for each month's winner. These are the unboxed prototype diecast models finished by British craftsmen before volume production begins in the Far East.

They often contain minor detailed differences from the models you can buy in the shops and consequently could in some cases become valuable in the future.

**Entries, please, by post or fax only (no e-mails yet, but look out for an e-mail address within the next two months) to arrive at the *Buses* editorial office in Glasgow by 31 January. The winner will be announced in March *Buses*.**





## Sheltering behind an image

It was Mrs M who spotted the latest example of how the bus's image is slipping in public estimation. The day before the West Bromwich West by-election and being a daughter of said Midlands town, her eyes alighted on a story in *The Times* in which the local newspaper had evidently missed the ultimately successful Labour candidate as 'having as much personality as a vandalised bus shelter'.

Mind you, that might not be so much of an insult around these parts. Courtesy of Glasgow City Council, I could point out some rather fine vandalised shelters not desperately far from the editorial office. For council and bus shelter provider between them have taken huge pride in installing what they say are the latest in bus shelter technology.

Which means practically the whole thing is made out of elegant glass. And yes, you've guessed what neither of those parties appeared to have seen coming in the shape of heavy missiles, you're quite often more likely to come upon a skeletal metal frame surrounded by little mountains of green glass fragments. I suppose they're state-

of-the-art if you're a fan of the works of Damien Hirst, but for a city where the major bus operator has one of the highest glass replacement requirements in the land it did seem optimistic — to put things kindly — to erect these tempting shelters so widely round the streets.

And new MP Adrian Bailey might also like to take on the mantle of the sort of vandalised bus shelter you could only find in Rab C. Nesbitt's Govan. It's one of Glasgow's more substantial, older structures and Billy Nicol has sent me evidence that it has gained rather than lost fittings. A sofa and cushions — and don't begin to ask where they came from — have been installed perhaps as a statement about the rarity of buses on that stretch of Crossloan Road. Or was someone inspired by the sight of Shetland's luxurious shelter in last month's 'On the Net' feature?



## NOR IS IT THE STATUE OF LIBERTY

The eagle eyes of Michael Dryhurst are responsible for finding this statement of the blindingly obvious on Liberty Road, Salem, the state capital of Oregon on the United States' west coast. As he muses, does every bus stop in the city have a similar-looking sign to say 'This is *not* a "No Left Turn" sign'?



## THERE'S STILL MONEY FOR BUSMEN

The latest *Sunday Times Magazine* Pay List of the country's top 500 earners still contains four names recognisable in the world of buses. No surprise, perhaps, that Stagecoach's Brian Souter is still leading the bunch with his £6.133 million in the year to 1 October (£431,000 salary and the rest in dividends) placing him 142nd and two places ahead of Sir Paul McCartney and that his sister, Ann Gloag (also featured as the magazine's Life in the Day feature that week) came 170th at £4.871 million and five places ahead of Phil Collins.

The other two are busmen whose investment in trains

through the creation of Prism Rail has turned them comfortably into millionaires. Blazefield's Giles Fearnley — described unflatteringly as 'the grey man of transport' — was 221st with £3.735 million gained largely from the sale of Prism to National Express. He is eight places ahead of Sir Anthony Hopkins, golfer Colin Montgomerie, footballer Steve McManaman and musician Fatboy Slim. Colleague Godfrey Burley of National Holidays is 256th with £3.328 million, one place ahead of Sir Alex Ferguson.

## THE INFINITELY SQUASHABLE INTEGRAL

I've brought you images of wrong-way-round buses, bus stops in the most unlikely positions and barely appropriate depictions of both on souvenir postcards. More will follow in the months ahead, but here's a new diversion. The squashed bus or coach.

My colleague Gavin Booth has observed how the latest desktop publishing technology allows those who know no better to ignore the possibility of defeat when faced with a picture that's too wide or too tall to fit into a space on an advertisement or leaflet. Undaunted by how ridiculous it looks, they happily distort the image to suit the space.

So visitors to Paris will be lured with suggestions that Guide Friday associate L'OpenTour's East Lancs-bodied Volvo B10Ms are either 6ft wide or 20ft tall, while Riviera Leisure Breaks offers Duple 425s nearer 10ft wide or eight feet tall. The advert warns that not all its coaches are liveried as shown, but for the sake of anyone over 3ft tall, we hope they're to more conventional dimensions.

On the other hand, the squashed dimensions of the Plaxton Panorama Elite are the least of its strangeness. It's on a

flyer for Nova Tours, a company based in Halifax. Nothing strange about that except this particular Halifax is the capital of the Canadian province of Nova Scotia where Elites are as common as MCIs and Prevosts on this side of the Atlantic.



## ENQUIRE WITHIN

### What is this coach?

Reader James Freeman of Oxford, no relation I suspect of his namesake formerly of Friends of King Alfred fame, wants to know a bit more about the exotic looking coach he photographed in the service of a Waterlooville, Hampshire firm.

It's an Ayats Apollo, a body-on-chassis coach from the same Spanish firm that today is selling small numbers of exotic-looking integral double-deckers. The Apollo was brought to the UK in 1982 just when high-floor coaches were beginning to gain favour and the market seemed to be open to all comers. The importer was called Intex (UK) and its presence on the coach scene appears to have been as short-lived as the Apollo.

This one seems to be on a rear-engined MAN chassis, but the original UK version was built on one from Magirus-Deutz, the German arm of Iveco which fairly soon after ceased making buses, costing Iveco all but a token presence in the German passenger vehicle market.





# NEW IMAGE NEW TARGETS

Stagecoach's new livery is merely a symptom of how the group is remodelling its UK bus business for future growth. ALAN MILLAR reports on what it's planning to achieve

**W**ithin three years, Stagecoach expects to have banished its UK bus fleet's trademark red, blue and orange stripes to the history books and transport museums as its softer new livery is applied to new and repainted vehicles. But if that's all it's done by the end of 2003, Brian Cox — executive director at the UK Bus Division — will be bitterly disappointed, for he is a man with a mission. A mission to secure some of the organic growth which so far has eluded much of the British bus industry.

Since taking up this post last August (after a 13-year career in Stagecoach, latterly as group development director, and with the Scottish Bus Group, English local government and British Rail before that), he has been rebuilding what today is a core

*Below:*

Stagecoach believes that its new interiors will help welcome new customers on to its buses.

*Below right and opposite:*

The first single-decker in the new colours is Stagecoach Bluebird MAN 18.220 HOCL/Alexander ALX300 722 (X722 NSO) operated — appropriately — on Perth city services with Fuel Saver advertising on the back. Incidentally, Ray Stenning based the mocked-up picture we showed last month of a Dennis Trident on a photograph by Tony Wilson, while this MAN was posed for official photographs carrying registration X824 SRM and 'Stagecoach in Fife' vinyls.

ALAN MILLAR

part of an increasingly diverse public transport business. UK Bus is one of the major brands within Stagecoach, alongside South West Trains, Coach USA and Citybus in Hong Kong. It's the only one which shares a brand name with the parent company and it's the only operational part of the business which runs from the group headquarters in Perth, where management functions have been transferred from regional offices around England.

Brian Cox — who commutes from his home near Wooler in Northumberland — accepts that Perth is not the most central location from which to manage a business with buses spread from the Cromarty Firth to Torbay and from South Wales to Grimsby, but Stagecoach always has been a Perth company and any drawbacks of a north-of-centre location are more than compensated for by the advantages of having a single head office within sight and sound of the group headquarters. He and managing director Les Warneford, a former National Bus Company manager who joined Stagecoach as managing director of Grimsby-Cleethorpes Transport and rose to become North West regional director, head a team which is already finding it easier to communicate and learn from one another's experiences.

## Cox's mantra

The strengthened head office is only part of the change. 'Since I took over this job, my mantra has been that we need a stronger centre and stronger operating companies,' explains Brian Cox. 'They are compatible objectives.' That is the thinking behind the September restructure from 19 operating units to 12 regional companies, each of which has been given more responsibility for the commercial development of services in its area. He is adamant that even though seven managing directors' positions have gone, this isn't a cost-cutting exercise. 'We didn't even calculate the overhead savings and, in any case, we're probably spending more on the new posts being created. Our costs are probably where they were before,' he says.

Indeed, it's worth explaining that although new regional companies like Stagecoach North East, East Midlands, South East and Scotland East have been created, the old subsidiary companies and profit centres won't necessarily disappear, and certainly not overnight. For one thing, that would require a round of operator licence applications, and it might not bring any operational benefits.

So, under the new structure, Stagecoach North West retains separate operations and engineering director positions for Ribble and





Cumberland, but Stagecoach North East has just one of each to cover Busways and Transit as the Tyne & Wear and Teesside businesses are closer together geographically and Hull has been transferred away from Transit to East Midlands. The new livery style allows for local fleetnames like 'Stagecoach in Leamington' where the regional companies want them.

The key change is that each of the regional companies has its own commercial director — either appointed from within the group or recruited from outside like former Nottingham City Transport managing director John Pope at East Midlands — with a remit to expand the businesses. They are expected to provide the vision which in the past came mainly from Stagecoach chairman Brian Souter and which will be vital in achieving the growth that won't come simply from waiting for the government's 10-year transport plan to take effect.

Their remit will be to focus investment on the routes they judge will deliver the best returns, so expect to see Stagecoach adopting FirstGroup's approach of concentrating new vehicle deliveries into the most profitable parts of the business, and for nearly-new, mid-life and older buses to be cascaded more robustly than before so that even the less big money spinners still get a regular supply of newer buses.

### Improving the peripherals

Brian Cox also expects Stagecoach to become more involved in providing a better waiting environment for its passengers and for it to take a pro-active stance in encouraging local authorities to develop local transport plans that include bus investment for the areas where public transport can do most good. He wants, for instance, to see bus lanes being introduced where bus operators need them and not just where there is road space to provide them.

'We will invest in anything from which we can make a return,' he says. 'I think one of the big deterrents to getting new users on to buses is just the shabby peripherals to the

service. We need modern, heated and lit shelters with real time information and while I do think that the main infrastructure costs need to lie with the local authorities, we should be prepared to invest, too.' He draws a parallel with the restructured railway industry, where Railtrack is responsible for the routes, but train operating companies like South West Trains put in the waiting areas.

He argues that winning new passengers on to buses is about more than satisfying City investors' expectations. It's also about delivering the returns needed for future development of the business and of providing the profits needed so Stagecoach can become more competitive in the labour market and overcome some of the driver shortages currently plaguing the industry.

The Fuel Saver advertising campaign launched with the new livery — a low budget exercise in true Stagecoach buccaneering spirit with flyers posted on car windscreens in commuter car parks and adverts on vacant spots on bus backs and sides and a few bus shelters — is a further sign of the group's intentions.

### The new look — from the inside out

So, of course, is the new livery; but Brian Cox is even more impressed by the new bus interiors being introduced with the latest deliveries. By the standards of its competitors, Stagecoach's continued use of traditional bus seats and harsh, if practical, colours was decidedly old fashioned, utilitarian and unwelcoming. The new style uses individual Lazzerini seats, a moquette based on the UK Bus Division's new ball logo and a red/orange carpet-style floor. 'I did feel that even if we had not come up with a universally acceptable new livery, we would still have done the interior,' he says.

The livery itself, commissioned from Ray Stenning of Best Impressions around graphics from Edinburgh-based McKinstrie & Wilde, owes something to Best Impressions' South West Trains livery. 'Our old image was excellent for the 1980s,' says

Brian Cox, 'but it had got tired. We had been looking for a year to 18 months to do something new. We told Ray that we didn't want to throw away our heritage, but we didn't want to make too little change, either. I indicated to him that we wouldn't be unhappy with a cousin to the South West Trains livery.'

Ray Stenning says he set out to make the livery look like it had evolved from the previous style. The colours are the same in as much as they are red, blue, orange and white, but most — maybe all — of the shades are different, including the base colour which has been changed to off-white which he believes is warmer and more friendly. Apart from the fact that the stripes were rooted in the late-1970s when coach operators began copying the Starsky and Hutch look of the TV cops' cars, he also felt that the equal proportions of red, orange and blue fought against one another; so the new livery separates the areas of red and blue and reduces the proportion of orange. It's also been designed to accommodate advertisements, rather than be partially obliterated by them.

'It's a softer and kinder shape at the front and back,' he says. 'It doesn't represent, but the use of curves does give a view of holding, embracing, looking after people. It says "We care about you and we look after you".'

The London version has been designed within London Buses' requirement that around 80% of the body area is in its uniform red. To achieve that, it has a shallower version of the dark blue skirt used on the regional fleets, and the blue and orange stripes towards the rear are shallower and do not extend on to the back itself. 'We've taken a basically all-red London bus and put enough graphic clues on to the livery to show that it's a Stagecoach bus,' says Ray Stenning who has been producing coach, bus and train liveries and graphic images since 1983 and who is responsible among many other schemes, for those used by Arriva, Beeline, The Shires and London & Country.



Below left:

The livery's older cousin: Ray Stenning's Stagecoach train livery on one of South West Trains' Wessex electrics. ALAN MILLAR

Left:

Stagecoach London Dennis Trident/Alexander ALX400 TAS268 (X268 NNO) is the first bus in the new London style, with a shallower blue skirt and rear upsweeps. RUSSELL YOUNG



# HALFCAB CORNER

More news from JOHN G. UDSTONE of the comings and goings of retired classic buses at home and abroad.

## GUY

Former Provincial full-front Arab/Reading rebuild HAA 771E, complete with air-cooled Deutz FGL514 engine, has just changed hands and is now with a new owner at Atascadero, California. Owner Mike Blake had noticed the bus gently at rest on a farm at Templeton, California for the past 15 years and bought it for just \$250, the tow to Atascadero costing a further \$200. He has converted it for use as a mobile wine tasting bar. It is the last of Gosport & Fareham's many rebuilds of older vehicles with new full-front bodywork — having been new to United Welsh as its DWN 378 back in 1944. It was bought for preservation in 1971, but just four years later was sold and converted into a caravan in late-1975, later appearing at a Knebworth rock festival in summer 1979 as a mobile shop, being purchased a year later for reconversion into a caravan. It surfaced in April 1983 with a new owner at Fort Collins, Colorado, USA. It now tours the Paso Robles region and British enthusiasts are welcome to a free ride.

## LEYLAND

Former Maidstone & District Tiger DKT 20 has most unfortunately been re-registered YKT 959B.

Rare ex-Bournemouth full-front Titan TD5 open-topper FEL 215 has gone from the Caister Motor Museum and is thought scrapped some time ago.

Veteran Southdown/Brighton Corporation Titan TD5/Park Royal reboddy EUF 204 and FCD 206 have happily been acquired by the British Bus Preservation Group after having been in declining condition in open store at Winkleigh with the West of England Transport Collection.

Former East Kent Titan CJG 990 has been advertised for sale and ex-Brighton PD2 5006 CD has passed out of preservation to Carl Ireland, Hull (dealer). Eastbourne PD1 open-topper JK 9114 was last recorded with Great Knight Tours of Atlanta, Georgia, USA.

Former Portsmouth Leyland Titan PD2 LRV 995 has been used to provide spare parts for LRV 991, now with a private owner in Barking who also has STP 995. Older Titan GTP 986 has also been used as a source of spares and was derelict on a farm near Gillingham when last sighted.

## EX-SOUTHDOWN QUEEN MARY PD3s

AOR 159B (402 DCD) passed to Turkey to a local distributor for Kenwood Products. London Bus Exports (dealer) took PRX 201/8B (413/4 DCD), plans to export both to Belgium having faltered. Dixons Group uses sister PRX 199B (405 DCD) as a mobile showroom painted in house colours of white and red. PRX 458B (421 DCD) has passed to the owners of BUF 426C for spares. Rare panoramic-windowed HCD 360E has gone to a Worthing area dealer for scrap. FCD 286D, latterly a driver trainer with Northumbria, is with Classic Southdown Omnibuses, Wimbledon and was recently modelled in NBC livery by Corgi.

Equally rare Yeates-bodied ex-Delaine Titan PD3 OCT 566 has been exported to Steptoe of Monnickendam in the Netherlands, who also has East Lancs-bodied ex-Eastbourne PD2 BKJ 677D.

Former Blackpool PD3A/MCW HFR 510E has passed to Ripley, Carlton (dealer).

Former Ribble Titan PD3/5/MCW BLV 756A (TCK 842) is being used as a source of spares, as is Leyland Atlantean PDR1/1/MCW ACY 229A (NCK 637) and also unusual former Preston PD2 rebuilt as a forward-entrance PD3, YNC 655A (NCK 757). Happier news of one of these rebuilds is that PRN 761 is now magnificently restored after five years hard work, in traditional maroon and cream livery by owner Traditional Travel of Carlisle and Preston's own workshops. It had been serving before as a hospitality unit at racecourses and for driver training.

Former Leicester Titan movements have seen PD3 CJF 68C go to a new owner in Ongar, Essex, but for spares (latterly with S&M Linkfast at Hadleigh); semi-automatic LJJ 31F has passed out of preservation and is a promotional vehicle for a computer firm, presently touring Eastern Europe.

## MORRIS COMMERCIAL

Old-established (1898) haulage firm Ritchie, Hetton-le-Hole has completed the restoration of a remarkable survivor in the shape of 1926 T-type SV 8236, now sporting a Ritchie 12-seat charabanc body, making its rally debut this past Easter.



Southdown Motor Services captured some of the magic of the Southdown Queen Mary Leyland PD3s in their heyday by operating its restored examples on Sunday and Bank Holiday service 77 between Brighton and Devil's Dyke on the South Downs. Open-top 406 (WRU 702B, 406 DCD) was a fair weather performer on this Countrywide Agency-supported service. RICHARD GODFREY



Former Lothian ASC 671B, an Alexander-bodied Leyland PD3/6, was used early last year as a staff training room when Asda opened a new supermarket at Tunstall in the Staffordshire Potteries. CLIFF BEETON



## ... NEWER BANGERS & BITS

Restoration of ex-North Western domed roof Strachans-bodied **Bedford VAL14 AJA 133B** is nearing completion. Sister AJA 139B is at the St Helens Bus Museum and AJA 132B is in use as a mobile caravan.

1969 Bedford VAM70/Plaxton C45F CGK 598H is still alive and well in South Africa, with Filros Transport of Graaff-Reinet as its CAZ 13731 and now sporting an Isuzu engine. It has recently been repaired after accident damage, but is apparently resting as there is no current work for it to do. It has been there since 1982.

Restoration of ex-Guernseybus **Bristol SUL4A** bus 75 and coach 154 is progressing — back to their original identities as Southern National 1560 and 1230.

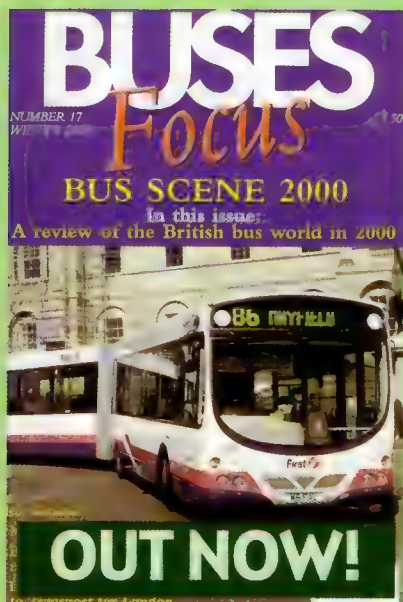
Former Tyne & Wear **Leyland Atlantean PDR2/1/Alexander GBB 524K** has been rescued from a Scottish farm where it has been used for berry-pickers transport and is with a preservationist in Newcastle Upon Tyne.



Seen in Montreal in September 1999 was former City of Oxford UFC 422K, a Northern Counties-bodied Daimler Fleetline operated on tours of the French Canadian city. The operator was Autocar Royal and the location was Dorchester Square, starting point for the tours.

NIGEL EADON-CLARKE

# BUSES Focus 17



## A REVIEW OF THE YEAR

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## EXTRACT MISSING



# COLCHESTER

*A Roman town with catholic taste*

The bold letters on signposts as you cross Colchester's principal boundaries make clear that this is 'Britain's Oldest Recorded Town'. The Romans called it Camulodunum, a name displayed prominently on all four sides of the open-top Leyland Atlantean AN68/ECW which Arriva Colchester — operator of the former municipal bus company sold to British Bus in November 1993 — uses three times a day between July and September on town tours.

The tour bus and its version of corporation maroon and ivory may be the most visible link with Colchester's civic and public transport heritage, but Arriva's commitment runs much deeper as four high-frequency cross-town routes operate on Mondays to Saturdays with increasing numbers of buses drafted in to replace 'native' types. Two other routes were lost to Eastern National in April 1994 at the end of a local bus war. One had begun 90

serving the Hythe, Colchester's Anglo-Saxon harbour; if that was a blow to municipal pride, so was the loss of the only service passing the municipal bus depot.

In a way, that was just the culmination of a slow process. After deregulation in October 1986, all the former Colchester Borough Transport tendered Sunday services were won by Eastern National, but that company — now First Eastern National and part of Essex Buses which also trades as Thamesway — has been embroiled in its own battles on other fronts.

In September 1991, Eastern National gained several contracts to serve Colne High School at Brightlingsea. They had been provided by Cedric Coaches of Wivenhoe since that company's formation and the loss of the contracts prompted Cedric to run scheduled bus services. Before, some of Cedric's Bristol VRTs continued empty from Brightlingsea to Colchester Fifth Form College; to keep them busy, these journeys were registered as peak hour bus services and the venture proved so successful that the timetable was increased to run hourly on Mondays to Saturdays. Nine years on, service 78X continues to operate in direct competition with Eastern National's

78. The fares are simple and it's usually operated by a trio of ex-Merseybus Leyland Olympian/ECWs.

## Biggest of the 'old guard'

The biggest of the 'old guard' independents, Hedingham & District Omnibuses, serves the town with its smart red and cream fleet. Its current network was gained entirely from the acquisition of old established business, rather than from head-to-head competition. Its most recent gain — in February 1997 — was of G. W. Osborne & Sons of Tollesbury, the biggest take-over in terms of vehicles, premises and staff. Most staff have been retained and still drive ex-Osborne Leyland Tigers into town on a much improved regular frequency of services.

In April 1991 Hedingham acquired W. Norfolk & Sons of Nayland which claimed at the time to be Britain's oldest bus company. Although Norfolk's fleetname and green livery was retained for five years, none of the vehicles have

## EXTRACT MISSING



**BUSES**



In the first of a new, occasional series of articles looking at towns and cities which used to have a municipal bus service, GEOFF MILLS surveys the current scene in Colchester, an Essex town steeped in history

survived. Nor were the premises retained as Hedingham moved operations into a purpose-built depot in Sudbury — prompting Norfolk's pioneering Colchester-Stoke by Nayland 84 service to be extended to Sudbury for driver/vehicle changes.

Although an ex-London & Country Leyland Tiger, with 1994 East Lancs body replacing its original ECW B51, was a habitual performer on the 84, its place has been taken by Hedingham's first Leyland Lynx which was new in 1988.

Hedingham began operating in Colchester in October 1965 when it took over Blackwells Motor Services of Earls Colne and became joint operator with Eastern National on service 88 from Halstead. That co-ordinated service continued with little change after deregulation, with each operator running every second hourly journey on Mondays to Saturdays; Eastern National provides the Sunday service on behalf of Essex County Council.

This seemingly ideal situation has been upset by the recent appearance of a newcomer on the same route with its 88H service registered to run five minutes ahead of Hedingham's journeys. Halstead Travel, owned by former Hedingham employee Ron Howard, runs a route-branded former Burnley & Pendle Mercedes-Benz 811D/Robin Hood on these journeys; previously, he had a Bedford YMT/Plaxton coach new to Barton.

Hedingham's response was to put route branding, Easy Access and Low Floor decals on to a Volvo B6/Plaxton Pointer and deploy it on service 608 which works to the same timings as Halstead Travel. So the regular daily procession into town is of the B6 (which isn't a low-floor bus in the sense most understood today), followed closely by the 811D and a little later by the now under-utilised 87-seat Hedingham Leyland Olympian/Alexander RL.

Hedingham and Eastern National provide Saturday park-&-ride services in the town, Hedingham the C2 operated mainly with a B6/Plaxton and Eastern National the C3 with a Bristol VR.

## Oldest of the small guard

H. C. Chambers of Bures — the oldest established private fleet still serving the town — is another operator of modern, high-capacity double-deckers. It has

bought new Olympians since 1989 and all journeys on its main service — the longest operated out of Colchester these days — are worked by Olympians and Scania N113/East Lancs Cityzen double-deckers bought new by Chambers. Four are employed each weekday and Saturday on the hourly 30-mile 753 route to Bury St Edmunds via Sudbury. This, too, came under competitive attack in November 1992 when Beestons of Hadleigh put a batch of Leyland Nationals based at the former Theobalds depot in Long Melford ahead of Chambers's

which succeeded Eastern Counties as operator of this route.

Over the years, there has been a more colourful selection of operators on the Sunday service. For a while, one was Carters' Coach Services, based then in Colchester and now in Ipswich. Its owner-driver proprietor has a long-standing admiration for the products of ECW's Lowestoft factory and there has always been one in the fleet. Carters also had periods of running Essex tendered services, including Sunday operation of the main road service to Chelmsford and the hotly contested route to Brightlingsea via Wivenhoe. Currently, Carters' operates a weekday link from East Bergholt on the Essex/Suffolk border with numerous villages that only had a twice-weekly service in the days before Suffolk introduced its more generous subsidies.



*Opposite:*

Colchester has become something of a gathering ground for Leyland TL11-engined Olympians. In addition to the ex-London Country trio with Arriva, the three ex-Merseybus examples with Cedric's of Wivenhoe also have this engine. The full set, complete with 78X route numbering, departs from the University of Essex on a Sunday assignment. all photographs by GEOFF MILLS

*Above:*

Arriva Colchester's fleet is being made up increasingly with older buses transferred from other parts of the Shires & Essex group of companies. 5383 (TPD 123X), seen in Westlands, is an early ex-London Country Leyland Olympian/Roe from East Herts & Essex at Harlow.

*Left:*

First Eastern National 910 (K910 CVW) is one of six Dennis Dart/Plaxton Pointer midis allocated to Colchester. It is seen turning into the bus station while on service 64A which replaced Colchester Borough route 4 to Hythe.

timings. This competition evaporated within two years, by which time the Nationals had been replaced on most journeys by a pair of ex-London Country AEC Reliances.

By contrast, Chambers's presence on a Sunday is confined to a solitary midibus on service 757 from Sudbury; it then continues along the main 93 route to Ipswich which is tendered by Suffolk County Council. Weekday hourly services on the 93 are provided by Eastern National



These grants have encouraged a new operator to start up with a most unusual bus. Wish-u-Were Here of Martlesham operates twice-weekly service 750 from villages closer to the River Stour in Suffolk by way of the heart of picturesque Constable countryside in Essex. The vehicle is a Leyland Atlantean rebodied by East Lancs as a single-decker for Catch-a-Bus of Hylton Castle, Co Durham. Ipswich Buses provides a short working to Dedham on the three alternate weekdays, usually with an Optare MetroRider.

### Stansted spawns new connections

Arriva Colchester has also been wooed beyond the borough to work tendered services. Since 21 August, Braintree-Stansted Airport service 133 has been operated daily with a route-branded Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814D/Plaxton Beaver which connects with Arriva East Herts & Essex service 510 to Harlow.

The growth of Stansted has fostered two rival services. FirstGroup operates the hourly Stansted Coach Link (16 journeys a day) with blue route-branded Mercedes-Benz Sprinter minibuses, although red First Airport minibuses and green/yellow Eastern National Mercedes/Plaxton midibuses also appear. Initially, this service was operated by Biss Bros under contract to Anglia Railways and it terminated at Colchester North railway station which is some distance to the north of the town centre; it missed out Braintree as well as central Colchester, but was extended to Colchester bus station after FirstGroup acquired the Biss Bros/Airport Coaches businesses.

Cambridge Coach Services also provided a two-hourly link to Stansted via Braintree bus park, using its standard stock of Volvo B10M/Plaxton coaches. Following CCS's acquisition by AirLinks, it was re-routed to call at Colchester North station and, increasingly, green Jetlink coaches have appeared in place of the blue/grey coaches used before. At Stansted, it connects with the same operator's Airbus coaches into central London.

National Express serves Colchester with the Clacton-on-Sea to London Victoria service currently operated by Galloways of Mendlesham with a DAF SB3000WS/Van Hool Alizée coach. The route is based on those founded by Grey-Green and Suttons of Clacton, later operated on a regular frequency by National Travel (South East) from Kelvedon until the work was put out to tender. Before Galloways, the Clacton service was provided by First Wessex. National Express also offers an 11-hour run to Liverpool via Nottingham, Sheffield and Manchester, operated by Express Travel of Speke with Volvo B10M/Van Hool coaches, but several others have provided it in the past.



Various operators have offered early morning commuter services into London, but none survived into 2000, largely because of the high frequency of First Great Eastern trains with many journeys achievable in under an hour.

### Coaching without kids

Although thought of more as a destination these days (not least with the volume of coaches taking visitors to Colchester Zoo), this is one part of the country in which an enterprising operator is trying to buck the declining trend in the day excursions market by offering a varied programme of coach outings. Genial Travel was formed in 1993 by a former school teacher who had grown tired of unruly children. He started out with a Volvo B58/Plaxton Supreme and has replaced it twice over by more modern coaches. All pick-ups are made to the west of the town to ensure that the coach is on the way to its destination within half an hour.

Kings of Stanway, based on the London Road to the west side of Colchester, has

also succeeded in avoiding school bus work and maintains a consistently smart fleet of relatively modern cream and duo green coaches on private hires and tours. It has four Bova Futuras supplied new and four secondhand Van Hools, two of them integrals.

Even though the corporation bus may now be a part of Colchester's past, this historic town clearly remains a centre for vibrant urban and rural bus operations and for a full range of coaching activities.

#### Top:

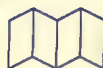
As part of the battle for business on the Halstead route, Hedingham Omnibuses has added service 608 journeys operated by 'Low Floor' L297 (M832 CVG), an ex-Lambert, Beccles Volvo B6/Plaxton Pointer. Although its floor is lower than on the rival operator's original Bedford, this is a step entrance B6.

#### Above:

First Airport Buses 102 (P437 OVW), one of four Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 410D minibuses in the new blue Coachlink livery for the Stansted service. It was preparing to leave the bus station.

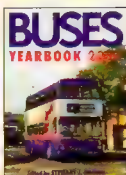


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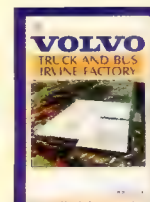
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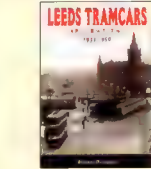
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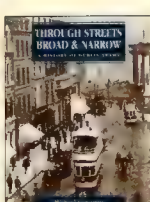
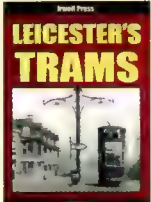
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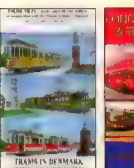


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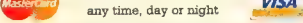
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# MAP OF THE MONTH

**BARRY S. DOE** finds little to commend the latest map produced for routes serving one of southern England's new towns

**W**hile I try to cover a different part of the country each month, important issues sometimes compel me to go back over relatively recently travelled ground. So even though I looked at Hampshire's maps as recently as August, the publication of an area map for Basingstoke cannot be ignored.

Until recently, Hampshire published 13 books, each with local maps by Pindar. It is now re-issuing the whole series with a different (unstated) cartographer save for Basingstoke where the 96-page book has been replaced by a single map, still from Pindar and which this time quotes Hampshire's phone number, 01962 841841, although I believe that is the switchboard and I still prefer to use 846924 as quoted in August.

The book was a county publication part-funded by Stagecoach Hampshire Bus but including all operators and which contained a proper street map style bus map. The new map is still joint, but inside is only emblazoned 'Stagecoach Hampshire Bus' and it appears very much to have been constructed with anything else as a mere afterthought.

It is of the type that gives each route a different colour and, as usual with this sort of map, works well until one gets to the town centre. There is no key to colours and one is merely told that a coloured route is a bus route. Different colours are used for town routes 1 to 9, the 76/86 to Andover is green, while all other rural and inter-urban routes are grey.

## Wiring diagrams don't plug routes

At least the routes do not enter a blank box for the town centre, as it shows the roads used so it can be correlated with the inset that shows the routes in detail. However, the inset is still one of those 'wiring diagrams' with routes coming in six-thick and joining a ring road which contains 10 parallel routes.

In my opinion, few well-sighted people will follow it, and certainly the significant percentage of the male population which is part-colour blind will make nothing of it. Perhaps it doesn't matter for though I am blessed with being in the former group and can see it all, it makes no sense to me as most numbers appear all round the ring road. So I assume the ring road is one way, but which way I am not told.

Nine stops in the town centre inset are lettered A to H respectively, two more are shown without letters and there is also the bus station. There is no key for any of this.

Perhaps the rear of the map will help, where there are frequency details for each route. No, not at all, for nothing whatsoever is said about the routes taken, nor any mention made of the lettered stops, the unlettered ones or the bus station.

Each route has a panel to itself. This gives the

first bus 'to town' (yes, that is all one is offered on terminal points) the last from town and the daytime and evening frequency. There is no way of finding out the times for journeys from Basingstoke; even when it comes to Andover one is only told the first bus is 06.20 from Andover and 22.30 back. Surely a Basingstoke map is of chief use to those living there. Those living in Andover are blessed with having retained a proper timetable so don't need this.

## Unhelpful frequency information

If that is not bad enough, the way rural routes are treated is disgraceful. Countywide Travel 10 runs from Winchester via Micheldever. There are five a day, roughly two-hourly. Its panel simply says the first bus from Winchester is 09.00 and the last back to Winchester 16.30, and the frequency is 'irregular'; no times the other way round; no journey length; no intermediate times, for all of which room exists.

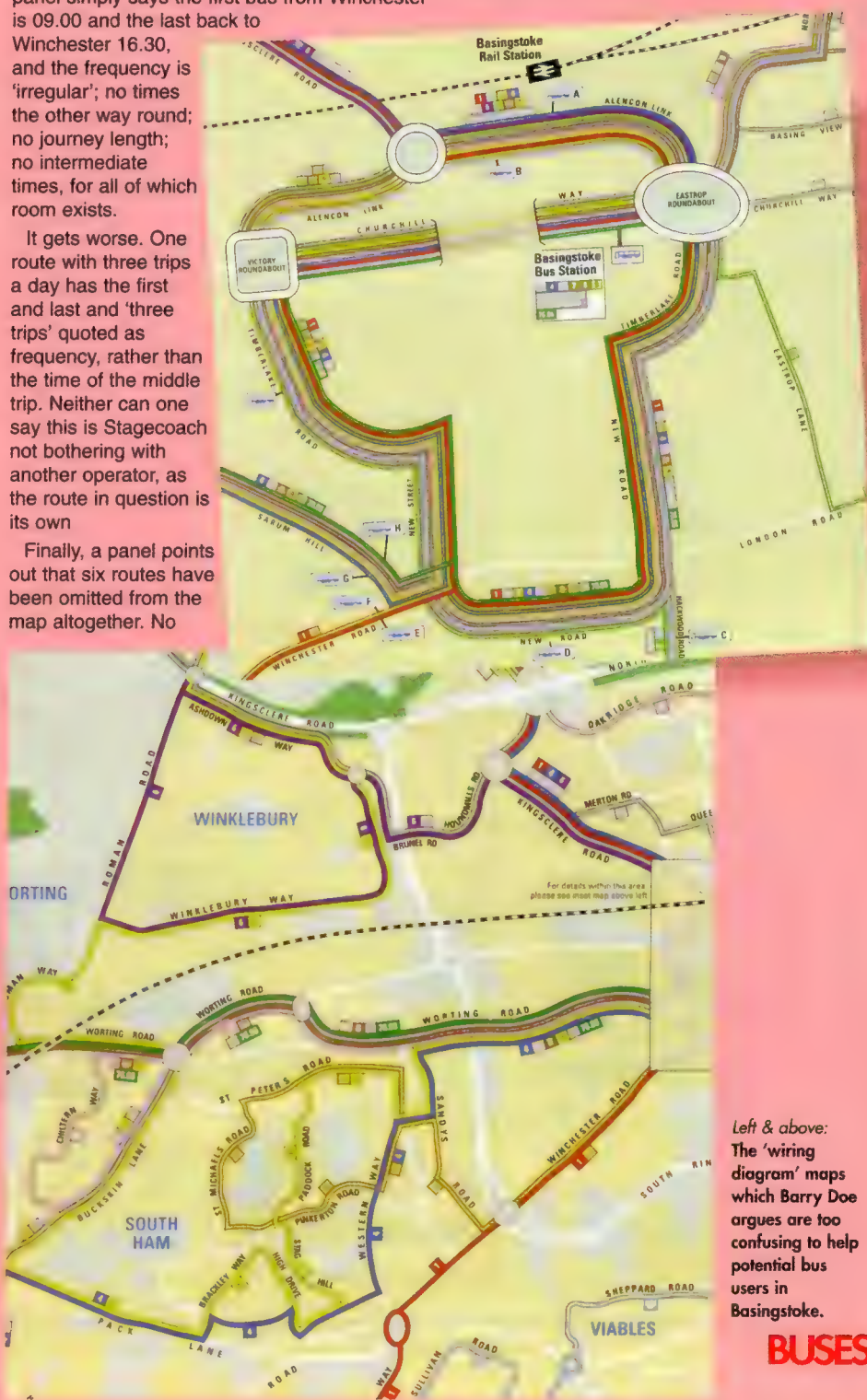
It gets worse. One route with three trips a day has the first and last and 'three trips' quoted as frequency, rather than the time of the middle trip. Neither can one say this is Stagecoach not bothering with another operator, as the route in question is its own

Finally, a panel points out that six routes have been omitted from the map altogether. No

reason is given. Do not assume it is because they are even less frequent than three a day as that is not true.

Lest the county blames lack of room for a proper frequency chart, let me just say that it has found room for a large rail frequency chart including sample fares and a panel for coaches, plus a rail map for all Hampshire.

This is one of the least useful and worst designed maps I have ever seen and it is amazing that the county should treat a major town this way. Will those responsible tell us why it permitted this when superb examples of maps that really can replace timetables exist, such as those from Warrington or Stoke-on-Trent?



Left & above: The 'wiring diagram' maps which Barry Doe argues are too confusing to help potential bus users in Basingstoke.

**BUSES**



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# ON LINE FOR MORE SALES?

FirstGroup hopes the convenience of internet ordering will win new customers for its season tickets. ALAN MILLAR considers its plans with the sometimes questionable benefit of experience of buying other people's tickets on line

Anything that might make it simpler for the driving public to consider switching to public transport must be welcomed, if only for its laudable intentions.

For on the very day that FirstGroup unveiled its latest temptation to the nation's motorists, the Automobile Association was reporting that traffic levels on London's roads were up by 25% as rail commuters — and even more disturbingly the off-peak riders — were taking to their cars in the face of speed restrictions and general unreliability that broke out immediately after the Hatfield train crash.

What's especially vexing is that these people won't all return willingly or enthusiastically to public transport when the rails have been glued back together and the extensive flood damage has also been cleared up. The industry as a whole — whether running buses or trains — has a massive confidence-building exercise to do just to reassure its existing customers about the reliability and convenience of its services, let alone restart the task of wooing more motorists away from their cars.

FirstGroup's initiative builds on its desire to be innovative and harness new technology ahead of its competitors. The group which brought the simplified network approach of its Overground routes in big cities and Metro branding for the smaller ones was also the first to make large-scale use of smartcard stored value ticketing technology, starting in Bradford last April.

Now it's claiming another industry first. The first to offer bus and rail passengers

the opportunity to buy season tickets on the internet. On-line booking has already been well developed by budget airlines easyJet, Go and Ryanair, it's available to rail passengers booking through Virgin's thetrainline.com, for National Express coach travel through its GoByCoach.com site and for car rental. So it was only a matter of time before it also became available for local bus travel. Passengers with First Calderline and First Manchester were the first to take advantage of its availability within hours of it going live in mid-November.

## On the back of the railways

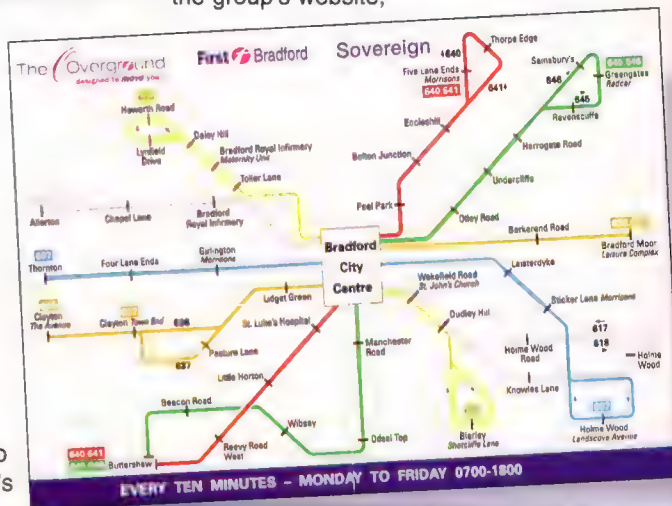
It's perhaps only come this soon because FirstGroup also is a train operator. The group's FirstInfo subsidiary has developed on-line booking for the First Great Western, North Western and Great Eastern rail subsidiaries, selling season tickets and individual journey tickets. On-line rail booking began in a small way at Great Western early in 2000 and the range of products sold on the system has increased steadily since then.

FirstInfo's managing director, Elaine Holt, doesn't expect the same range of bus tickets to be sold on the system. 'Today the reality is that the internet isn't suited to selling a £2.50 bus ticket,' she explains. So the initial offerings are confined to monthly and longer duration season tickets sold by 10 companies — Calderline and Manchester plus Bradford, Huddersfield, Leeds, Mainline (Sheffield), CityLine (Bristol), Eastern Counties (Norwich only), Glasgow and PMT (Stoke on Trent). Those 10 offer 26 different types of tickets.

They were the first because of the range of suitable tickets that they sell, but others are expected to join the system during 2001, with First Aberdeen for example

waiting until it's ready to launch a new range of tickets as part of its Overground network. In fact, all FirstGroup companies were invited to participate in the on-line system.

The ticket sales are accessible through the group's website,



Right: On-line booking is possible with First Bradford whose linked website allows the browser to obtain route-by-route details of the six Overground-branded routes in the city.



[www.firstgroup.com](http://www.firstgroup.com), and through those of its regional companies. There are distinct differences between the local sites, depending on the level of information passengers require for the tickets being sold by each company; the content also is partly determined by whether or not passengers also need a photocard to use the tickets — something that the group appears to be phasing out as more of its multi-journey tickets are transferable between friends and family at different times of day. But the format is broadly similar with a summary of the ticket options available, of the areas in which they can be used and a secure system to place the order.

By linking into the regional companies' websites, you can also get some route information, especially on the Bradford, Sheffield and Glasgow Overground networks. The two Yorkshire ones also have a facility to click on to individual routes on the Overground map to get more details of routes, city centre stops and hours of operation. The Bradford site also gives details of the workings of the smartcard-based FirstCard there.

### Payment choice for bus passengers

Credit and debit cards are expected to account for most on-line sales, but there's also an option to order on-line and pay by sending a cheque through the post — something Elaine Holt says has been included to help bus passengers who don't have payment cards.

Either way, a confirmation e-mail is sent to acknowledge receipt of the ticket order and this is followed by a second when the tickets are despatched. FirstGroup says tickets will normally be posted to arrive within three days.

It's convinced that on-line booking will make public transport more attractive, initially at least by removing the need for passengers to leave the comfort of their home or office to queue at stations, sales offices or agents to buy or renew their tickets. It should also provide the group with more useful information about its customers' buying habits.

To begin with, it's going to be selling the on-line service purely on the strength of its apparent convenience. Elaine Holt argues that season tickets already are substantially discounted, so you won't find the heavily promoted (e.g. £1 to £2.50) discounts offered by airlines or [thetrainline.com](http://thetrainline.com) for internet bookings.

She expects FirstGroup to be taking 20% of its rail bookings by interactive media within five years; 20% incidentally is the proportion of households which today have internet access, and that figure is rising rapidly. She's a lot less specific — or presumably optimistic — about on-line penetration of the bus travel market. Against 20% for rail, she only talks of



'some' bus sales over the next five years, but she professes to be surprised by how quickly those initial customers in Halifax and Manchester took advantage of the medium.

Above:

First Huddersfield is another early convert to on-line season ticket sales. Its network includes rural services upon which Dennis Lance/Plaxton Verde 4033 (M433 VWW) was passing along Manchester Road, Marsden in October.

RICHARD GODFREY

### How good is the back-up?

What isn't yet clear is just how user-friendly on-line bus ticket sales will be. It's certainly been designed to be easy to use, with prompts to take you from stage to stage and there's a clear commitment to keeping the personal financial information secure.

But there's another side to internet booking. Your editor's personal experience with rail and air systems is that they don't always work. You sometimes cannot proceed beyond the option to follow instructions in English or French. Other times it's painfully slow, refuses to accept that you really want to make a round trip on the same day or it takes you right up to the last stage of a lengthy ordering process before going into the computer equivalent of a catatonic trance and won't let you buy the ticket.

When that happens, there's usually an option to phone a call centre where you may have to queue for an answer, listen to something like 'Home on the Range' and a repeated recorded message asking if you knew you could order tickets on the internet. Almost invariably, you are then put through to an efficient, ever-so-helpful trained operator who processes your order in a fraction of the time it takes to plod through the website's hoops — for a marginally higher fare than you pay on-line.

FirstInfo's 500-strong call centre at Plymouth will be able to provide this back-up for rail ticket bookings, but bus phone bookings are being routed through the regional companies themselves,

apparently because they want to maintain some control over their ticket sales. The Plymouth call centre is open from 07.00 to 22.00 which probably provides the bulk of the convenience of being able to make internet bookings at any time of your own choosing and convenience.

The bus company sales offices are unlikely to have such long opening hours or staffing levels, although the group talks of people being available for the hours that a bus company operates — like from 04.00 to midnight.

Problems many travellers have experienced with [thetrainline.com](http://thetrainline.com) bookings are apparently caused by the incompatibility of some rail industry computing systems, so the need for call centre assistance may be less acute with bus bookings. But nagging doubts must remain about the possibility of sales being lost when potential new riders — articulate consumers unafraid to assert their buying power — run up against on-line booking problems in the late evening and cannot get past the depot security gate-keeper when they phone in for help.

If these pitfalls can be avoided or overcome, then FirstGroup could have one of the answers to selling public transport in the 21st century. It says it's only putting its toe in the water with this venture which deserves to be commended at very least because it offers a modern age option to the way that bus fares can be paid. And a system today's up and coming generations understand.



# YOU WRITE

To BUSES,  
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## BOGOF is needed on the buses

Everything that Harry Barker says in his article 'Time for a "Can Do" Culture' (*Buses* December) with respect to using retailer marketing techniques to stimulate new customers and increased usage from existing customers is correct and echoes what I've been saying to our clients for some time.

The two most powerful words in the marketing dictionary are 'new' and 'free' and promotions such as BOGOF (buy one, get one free) are marketing tools the bus industry should adopt more readily.



Barton Buses' Rushcliffe Line branding on 415 (W415 YAL), an Optare Solo in service in Nottingham city centre.  
ALAN MILLAR

The one area not mentioned by Harry Barker is market research. We have worked with Trent and Barton Buses (used as an example in the article) for several years to provide the market information they need to develop their highly successful branded routes.

This again is how the fast moving consumer goods (fmcg) industry works where regular surveys monitoring brand awareness, attitudes and satisfaction are the norm.

The bus industry can only benefit by basing its marketing strategy on reliable consumer information rather than guesswork, hunches or myths which may well be outdated.

Brian W. McCarthy  
Knowle, Solihull

## Thoughts about lost potential

In recent issues, there is talk about a declining market for bus travel. Maybe, but the *potential* market for the bus industry is always expanding: every year more teenagers face the decision whether to get a car, tax and insure it and learn to drive (all of these are getting more complex and more expensive); more people get older and would like to give up driving on the congested roads, and more people face driving bans or disabilities as a result of road accidents.

Most of these people could be bus passengers. Why aren't they? This is a question that bus company managers ought to ask every morning when they look at themselves in the mirror: why is my company's turnover not growing rapidly and consistently? May I offer a few more thoughts?

A short while ago I had a day out by bus. It was very enjoyable in general but mainly because I knew how the bus world works. It is a deep mystery to many people. First, my second bus (the hourly 729 to Brighton) missed picking up a woman at a stop blocked off by road works. There was no alternative stop set up and obviously no notice on the regular bus stop. Despite the woman waving wildly, the driver did not stop.

My third bus (the occasional 246 to Sheffield Park) left from the wrong stand at Uckfield bus station. I was the only passenger and the driver told me the bus usually runs empty. There is no publicity saying that the bus connects (well, sort of) with trains on the Bluebell Railway and no proper stopping place when we got there. A tragedy of missed opportunity.

My fifth bus (the hourly 254 from Tunbridge Wells) nearly missed me, the driver saying that he only picked me up out of kindness and that the bus was not supposed to stop where I was waiting. Only problem was that it was listed as stopping there on the timetable at the stop. In fact, most of the buses which I know stop there were not listed, but this bus was.

All this comes down to a lack of detailed customer care. In particular, road works are a minefield of their own. Surely it is in the interests of both the bus companies and local authorities to sort this out. Maybe a Road Works Tsar is needed. At least there should be a substantial fee charged to the organisations that dig up the roads, to pay for better signs — for bus and car users — and for extra buses to be put on.

There is one other deeply relevant fact stopping a lot of people using buses. Can they do what they want by bus? I was lucky having a whole day to spend travelling, but more often people look to just a morning or afternoon out and how far can you go by bus and still get back in four hours, having usefully spent an hour or so shopping or sightseeing? By bus, I can reach Tunbridge Wells, Hawkhurst and — just about — Tonbridge or Crowborough. By car, I can have a morning out in Tenterden, Rye, Battle, Hastings, Bexhill, Eastbourne, Seaford, Newhaven, Lewes, Brighton, East Grinstead, Sevenoaks, Maidstone, Chatham, Rochester — and anywhere in between. See what I mean?

This can be improved. Buses cannot travel at much higher speeds, but connections can be thought about when timetabling, and layout at connection stops given more thought. An express network like the German and Dutch Schnell-buses could fill gaps in the rail system (unfortunately, the new Connex 60 between Uckfield and Lewes takes 40 minutes, longer than the 729); evening buses can run later; frequencies can be doubled, through ticketing

introduced and more information about where you can get to should be put on bus stops. Let's also have details of the real fare bargains (Explorer etc) which no one seems to know about.

Best of all, bring back the conductors. Yes, hooray for Ken! The lemming-like dash over the cliffs of OPO in the 1970s seems really mad in retrospect. What other industry, at a time when the main competitor (the car) was becoming faster, more reliable, cheaper and more comfortable, has made its own product (bus travel) slower, a lot less reliable, no more comfortable and in general more expensive (as per Barry Doe's article in November *Buses*)?

Yours in hope,  
R. J. P. Townend  
Wadhurst, East Sussex

## Cheapest may not always be best

Barry Doe's article comparing bus and rail fares (November *Buses*) seems to give readers the impression that Wilts & Dorset is some sort of evil bus giant ripping off its customers.

The photos used to illustrate the cheapest and dearest bus companies will hopefully not have been lost on an open-minded reader. We see a tired old third hand offering from that well known rolling museum known as Southern National, which appears to be suffocating all its passengers in a ventilation-free interior. Compare this with the attractive, well-blinded and ventilated brand new Optare Excel 2 low-floor from W&D.

Readers might also wish to ponder where each company chooses to spend its profits. Indeed, perhaps we should ask if First Southern National makes any profit at all. W&D runs a largely modern fleet, turns out its elderly refurbished Bristol VRs looking better than when they were new, while working with Optare to produce the Solo, the best little bus the UK has had for some time. Add to that list staff who wear a proper uniform and tie, timetable booklets and maps which usually win Mr Doe's hard-earned approval, all provided in a very affluent area of high car ownership, and I think readers will agree that those extra pennies are returned with interest.

Cheap service means no money to improve and invest, and given the cuts made by First Western National, don't be surprised if Southern National follows suit.

One final observation is that the 'cheap' rail fare offered by Stagecoach's South West Trains franchise merely adds to the huge profit made by that train operating company which actually receives the highest operating grant, yet operates the oldest mainland passenger-carrying coach in the country. Gricers, it's in a 4-CEP.

Oh, and I don't work for W&D, but have worked for Stagecoach.

Nigel Barnes-Evans  
Southampton

## Are bus fares an official national secret?

It is not surprising that Barry Doe, even with his expertise, finds it difficult to obtain fare charts from bus companies, since this has been the case for as long as I can remember.

In pre-National Bus Company days, most municipals and a few independents and BET companies were prepared to publish fare tables; the BTC/Tilling companies, however, seemed to treat such information as if it fell



under the Official Secrets Act. Maybe it did. Perhaps passengers might be more inclined to travel if they were able to establish the cost of a journey before embarking upon it.

**David Todd**  
Feltham, Middlesex

## Concessionary fares in Somerset

Further to Barry Doe's article, First Bristol has recently withdrawn the Bus Card Plus scheme.

During the past two or three years, I have bought a £50 card and generally used it within the Sedgemoor Travel Pass area (last card cost £4.20). With the £8 bonus, this equals £116 worth of travel, but it is not available for use in Weston-super-Mare (North Somerset) although it was recently available for Wells or Bath (Bath & North East Somerset).

Our pass gives half fares. Bakers Coaches runs the 490 (Burnham-on-Sea) Somerset County Council supported service via Kings & Wessex School at Cheddar. Journey time to Bristol though is one hour, 45 minutes covering 73 miles and at £1.55 return must be about 2.12p per mile. Burnham-Bath Wednesdays only also is £1.55 return.

Half fare on First Southern National's twice-weekly Burnham-on-Sea/Bristol via Cribbs Causeway costs me £2.45 return (about 6p/mile). OAP Explorer Tickets at £3.75 valid on Badgerline/CityLine/Southern National/Red Bus etc can save me £8 to £10 on ordinary fares for a day out. Burnham to Minehead, Seaton or Yeovil can all be covered comfortably.

**Albert G. Vowles**  
Burnham-on-Sea, Somerset

## Average cost could be £4.20 per vehicle mile

Barry Doe may be interested to know that while working for the former Bristol Omnibus Company as a senior schedules clerk at Bath, my area traffic manager at the time asked me to start a project of marrying up other operators' timetables with our own to provide longer services.

Unfortunately, I was given an office on my own and taken off normal duties, something to which my colleague who was also chairman of the clerical side of the Transport & General Workers Union strongly objected. He reported the matter to head office in Bristol which quickly put a stop to such an idea.

When I was made redundant in September 1983 at the age of 56 and having served with the company for 35 years and three months, I knew that it would not be possible to get further employment within the bus industry.

I revived the project, but decided to cover the whole of England, Scotland, Wales, some Scottish islands, the Isle of Wight and Isle of Man, but being unable to get timetables from other operators I had to use guesswork. The network was based on a 30-minute minimum headway on all country services and also included city and town services for Bath, Bristol, Cheltenham, Gloucester, parts of Swindon and Weston-super-Mare. It was completed in 1992.

The network required 65,655 buses of which 52,021 would be in daily service, leaving 13,634 (25% of the fleet) for maintenance and duplication when required. I estimated the mileage was approximately 6,593.92 million per annum. At an average cost of £4.21 per mile. The number of drivers required, which included cover for holidays and sickness, was 32 for every seven vehicles operating at the

double-decker rate of £15,443.78 per annum. Fuel costs were 350 miles at 7mpg, 50 gallons a day at £3 per gallon.

When I did manage to get some timetables, I discovered my costing was very expensive vehicle-wise by between 25% and 50% in some cases; £4.21 per vehicle mile, divided by 70 passengers equals 6p approximately per passenger mile.

The total cost of operation which was started from scratch, running on purchasing of depots and vehicles paying off all interest charges and making a 25% profit overall before tax was £27,705.95 million of which £54,608.91 million was profit. Since then, I have completed a revised project, but I did not cost it because I could not get the information I required. Some operators did not reply to my letters though I offered to pay for the timetables plus postage and packing.

My third and final project is progressing very slowly as all the timetables are written out in full and include express services, and all the services are on 30-minute headways and 24-hour operation all year round. It will be difficult to complete the costing as age and health problems may in the long term defeat me.

**William G. Hannis**  
Radstock, Bath

## Scottish fares comparisons

Barry Doe's article about differences in bus fares raises echoes of the situation in Scotland 50 years ago, which may come as a surprise to readers in southern England. Everybody in Scotland (except, it seems, politicians) knew that the bus fares of the (nationalised) SMT Group were about 40% of those of the (nationalised) British Railways.

Almost invariably, the buses were also much more frequent. Cheap day returns by rail were available for journeys up to 50 miles, usually at exactly the same fare as by bus, and much less than the ordinary single fare, and there were also some day excursion tickets, usually with restricted validity. Inevitably, rail closures under Beeching were drastic although they had already begun before his time.

The ABC timetables published monthly by Aberdeen Journals quoted fares as well as times for journeys to and from Aberdeen and have been a valuable source. They ceased publication, however, around 1970, just before the inflationary pressures of the 1970s altered conditions somewhat.

**Bill Bremner**  
Southampton

## Duplicated route numbers and non-working bus lanes

Mention was made some months back of the fact that in some counties there is duplication of route numbers for different routes and it was thought that this could confuse tourists.

I am not sure that this is likely to cause a problem with routes in different parts of one county. Much more serious, though, is the current situation in London with London Pride using route numbers as, in some cases, these routes traverse common sections of route with London Buses services carrying the same numbers. Both No.6 routes have a common section in Regent Street and Haymarket, while both No.9 routes have a common section in Piccadilly and Haymarket. There are almost certainly other examples which do not so readily come to mind and I think this must be very confusing to tourists.

In the same part of London, the northbound bus lane in Regent Street does not work in the morning peak because delivery vehicles are allowed to park in the bus lanes then, but not later in the morning. There does not seem to be a corresponding problem in the reverse direction as the level of traffic that way seems to be much lighter. Maybe the solution would be to continue to allow delivery vehicles to park on the east side of Regent Street at that time, while banning them from parking on the west side.

In a similar vein, the bus stop outside Charing Cross station is quite often partially blocked by commuter coaches which tend to wait for several minutes after dropping their passengers. Yet, only a few yards farther forward is the stop used in the main part of the day by the Original London Sightseeing Tour which does not operate in the morning rush hour. Couldn't the commuter coaches use that stop instead?

**John Humphrey**  
Sevenoaks

*The route number confusion may be eased as the new owner of London Pride (see 'News' section) intends to identify most of its tours by names rather than numbers. — Ed.*

## The low-floor coach conundrum

I am not without sympathy for your correspondent Richard Greenwood ('You Write' September) who finds climbing a flight of steps on entering a touring coach something of a chore. But at the same time it is hard to imagine, given that a decent view of the passing scenery is an integral part of a coach holiday, a vehicle based on a low-floor chassis that was not so full of ramps and pedestals within the passenger area that would not be a total turn-off to most passengers.

In the past few years, my wife and I have undertaken a number of coaching holidays in the UK with both the operators mentioned by Mr Gregory ('You Write' November). Excepting feeder vehicles, neither of us suffered legroom or vision difficulties, although being of larger than average stature might have their respective effects on these aspects. We thoroughly enjoyed the holidays anyway, which has motivated us to repeat the experience next year.

I would advise Mr Gregory to compare the brochures of each company carefully, noting as much what isn't said as what is. There are significant differences between what each operator offers in terms of facilities, but given these differences each seems to offer good value.

I wouldn't rank the food as being 'eating out' quality, but on no occasion has it been less than acceptable. Arrangements can be variable. At one hotel in Chester, no longer used I must add, we were invariably booked in for the first sitting of the evening meal so that the day's excursion was always curtailed for a quick dash back to change for dinner, followed by a long evening of nothing much.

At a hotel in Grange-over-Sands, the food was outstanding and the service superb. If I was disappointed in anything about the last holiday we had — in Scotland of all places — it was the unimaginative choices. We soup-slurpers would have appreciated something other than lentil and I would have died for a Cullen skink or even a cream of chicken. The only evidence of imagination was with the person who wrote the menu at one west coast hotel where the haddock was described as 'locally landed'; this might have been true if the Birds Eye breaded filets had been delivered by a Caledonian MacBrayne ferry. It



was noted that certain members of our party did, however, presumably by prior arrangement with the management and at some extra cost, eat *a la carte*; and no doubt this facility would be open to anyone who wanted a more daring menu.

The coach driver is an important element in any such holiday. I'm not at all qualified to judge road craft, but the personable young man who piloted us round last year is certainly worthy of mention. Rather less taciturn than some, he demonstrated his ability to get on with everyone of a very mixed bunch on the coach.

But just a word of warning to any enthusiast who decides to take such a holiday: I wouldn't expect the driver to talk buses with you over his meal break, for he has to drive the damn thing all day and his view of them may well differ from yours. Well, no, I don't always stick to this. After a particularly tortuous stretch, we came to rest next to a Plaxton Pointer-bodied vehicle and as we descended the staircase I asked whether he wouldn't prefer a Dennis Dart to his Volvo B10M. 'Aye,' he said. 'Go anywhere and turn on a sixpence, but where'd you put your luggage?'

Which is (almost) where I came in.

**R. A. Flower**  
Thurston, Bury St Edmunds

## School bus photography

In 40 years of photographing transport, including behind what used to be called the Iron Curtain, I've never been shouted at, except occasionally by the 'Oil' machine from within bus garages, so I was surprised by recent letters in *Buses*.

Then a sizeable comprehensive school contract in Sheffield was recently transferred from Mainline to Mass Transit, run with a motley (nice to be able to use that word) collection of ex-London Titans. A fortnight after watching and photographing this departing spectacle, I've just had a couple of uniformed plods at the door asking what and why I was photographing outside a school. The fact that the school had already told them the answer hadn't deterred them from zealously following their rather worrying prejudices.

Creepy or what?

**Terry Cooper**  
Sheffield

It was most enlightening to have Paul Hilton's legal view of the photography question ('You Write' November). May I add that photographers of school buses too should be very careful lest their interest in the innocent pre-politically correct days of Robert Jowitt's celebrated genre be misunderstood.

While on the subject of cameras, has anyone yet managed to photograph a First Southampton bus (a) running to time and (b) bearing a both readable and intelligible electronic destination display? The appallingly badly handled recent service changes, and the new so-called timetable — available under fiction at the main library? — have given rise to much negative publicity in the local press.

**Graham J. Harrison-Watts**  
Southampton

## Bergen bus station

It would appear the Julian Osborne ('Service Extra' October) went straight from the arriving bus to the street in Bergen, despite the warning signs, instead of using the correct route.

This bus manoeuvring area is located on the street level of the city's central multi-storey car

park, and in common with such places could be better lit. There is a platform (several with a small waiting room) for each service or group of services, with stairs leading down to a clean, well-lit subway which itself leads to the bus station building (which is now being connected by an overhead walkway to the nearby railway station).

This main building has about four storeys around an atrium. Apart from the travel enquiry centre, there are various types of shops (clothes, book, hardware, fruiterer, fast food), a newsagent and a café. Many non-bus users come to the building for shopping or coffee in clean, safe and pleasant surroundings.

Perhaps if Mr Osborne had followed the herd to the main building, he would have realised that this is an excellent example of what a bus station should be like.

It seems that he was unfortunate at the airport. I have found that Norwegian bus drivers are almost without exception helpful and polite (and always wearing immaculate uniform) and for some strange reason seem to like the British.

**Roy Owen**  
Hitchin, Herts

*Julian Osborne replies: Thanks, Roy. Clearly a shame that I and my bus merely transited the station. Have we found a nice bus station here?*

## In search of GM Standards . . .

I am currently trying to compile a list of operators which currently or have previously operated ex-Selne/Greater Manchester standard Atlantean and Fleetline buses. If anyone has any information and/or photographs of these buses, please contact me at the address below or phone me on 0161 338 7995 any day after 18.30.

**C. Alcock**  
25 Lodge Lane  
Dukinfield  
Cheshire  
SK16 5HY



One operator of GM Standards is Byways which recently took over Lancaster-area service 450 after Stagecoach's Heysham Travel business ceased to operate it. Byways' former Stagecoach Manchester Leyland Atlantean ANA 550Y — still with former fleetnumber 4550 — was photographed in October.

BRIAN HOWSON

## . . . and old tax discs

This is a plea to all bus operators, owners and fleet managers, and also to dealers and dismantlers. You may be interested to hear of my rather unusual hobby.

I collect expired road tax discs. I have been collecting for 16 years, I have nearly 16,000 and my oldest is from 1933, from a 33-seat Bristol.

Most people, when they change a tax disc, slip the new one over the top of the old one, so you usually find a wad of three or four in the same holder. If that sounds like you, would you be prepared to send them my way?

It doesn't matter how old they are, what vehicle they are off or from what area they came. I collect any and all tax discs. I am prepared to send stamped addressed envelopes to anyone wishing to donate to my collection.

In June, a film crew from Channel 4's 'Collector's Loft' programme came to interview me with my collection, so I could be on national television some time between now and January.

**Neil Jones**  
6 Pleasant Place  
Beccles  
Suffolk  
NR34 9YD

## More on Cadger's funny B10M

The vehicle depicted in 'Fenton File' for May was, indeed, the only Duple 320-bodied coach on an 11m Volvo chassis. It was on chassis number 14690 with Duple body number 8774/0557.

There were several other Volvo B10M-56 chassis bodied by Duple around that time, but all carried bus bodies. The vehicle depicted was not only the last Duple 11m coach on a Volvo chassis to be delivered, but was the last 11m Volvo delivered in the UK. Cadger, incidentally, had also taken the last Plaxton-bodied 11m Volvo coach — this was D748 VSA, delivered in August 1986 on chassis number 12887 with body number 8611VUP2C0002.

The demise of the 11m chassis was brought about by cost. A 12m vehicle cost only a small amount more than an 11m vehicle yet had considerably more earning potential. The 11m vehicle was not sufficiently small to cater for the 38 to 42-seat market that was met by B9M vehicles on the B10M-48 chassis.

**Roger Carey**  
Kionlough, Isle of Man

## In defence of the Atlantean

Who on earth is Paul Reid ('You Write' July)? Why does he dislike the Atlantean so much? He's obviously not a real enthusiast, otherwise he would not slate a vehicle which altered the face of modern double-deckers.

True, this bus is now past its prime, but will we still see so many newer types in service in 40 years' time? I doubt it very much. This bus, along with the Fleetline, changed the way forward entrance buses looked. No modern bus can lay claim to virtually changing the bus scene overnight.

I've ridden on many Atlanteans, including Greater Manchester ones, and on no occasion have I experienced what Mr Reid appears to. It's down to the driver, I believe.

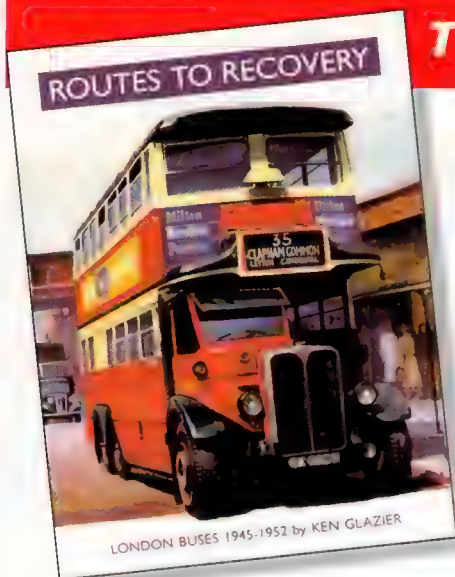
Also, bicycles are OK for short journeys, but I bet even the most hardened cyclist would swap cold and torrential rain for the comfort of any bus.

**T. Beechener**  
Hitchin, Herts

*This is a letters page and the views expressed therein are purely the views of the writers; they do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor or publisher of BUSES.*



## THREE NEW BOOKS

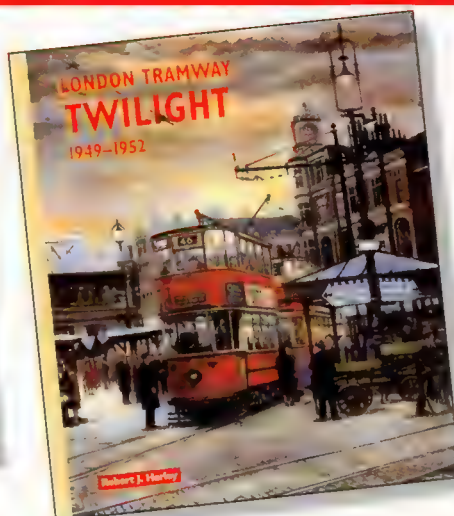


Ken Glazier's latest work covers the post-war recovery years on London's buses. The extended operation of time-expired buses, the hiring and borrowing of vehicles and the purchase of non-standard types are all included, together with the other events and developments of the period.

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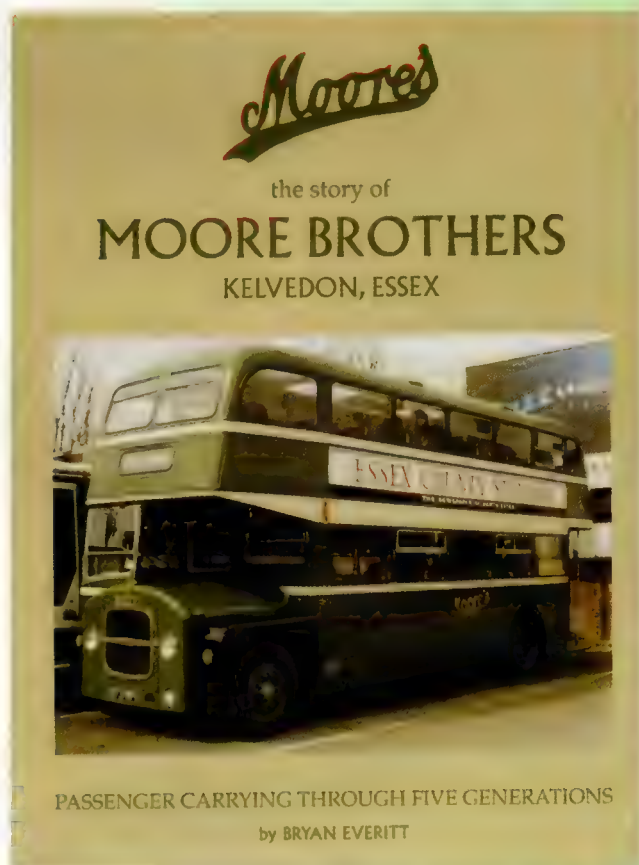
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# PICTURE



*Above:*  
Once a common sight and sound, most Maltese-built front-engined buses with AEC AV505 engines have been repowered with either Perkins Phaser or Leyland 411/420 turbo units. Two of the last were DBY 381, a 1967 Maltese-assembled Bedford with chassis and B40F body built by Brincat, and EBY 528, a 1969 Bedford MP200 with Debono B40F body built by docks apprentices. Note owner-driver Charlie's name on 381 and the wholly-opening windscreen unit for summer ventilation; 528 has the equally popular adornment of football badges.

*Right:*  
A hot rod bonneted bus nicknamed McLaren: 1952 Aquilina-bodied Ford ET7 DBY 454 has a Perkins Phaser engine — giving it the performance of a McLaren racing car — low-profile tyres and air suspension that raises the wheel arches to an almost absurd height. Just two years ago, this bus was tired, battered and thoroughly tatty and seemed destined for the nearest scrap yard.





# VIEW

## MALTESE MISCELLANY

The news that Malta's distinctly antique buses might be nearing the end of the road makes especially appropriate this atmospheric photographic selection of the island's fleet as seen last July through the lens of JOHN G. LIDSTONE's camera



*Above:*

Rare — and possibly unique — working 1948 Thornycroft Sturdy DBY 382 retains its original radiator grille and badges, even if a Leyland 401 diesel beats behind it these days. Badge thefts, happily, are unknown on Malta.

*Above left:*

Fresh last summer from major bodywork surgery was EBY 501, a Leyland 401-repowered 1957 Commer Avenger III with Aquilina body. Its previous large and ornate chromed grille and built-out wheel arch surrounds have gone and its plainer panelling is finished in tberfil — the Maltese word for ornate lining; only two craftsmen do this and it takes a day to decorate a bus.

*Left:*

Maltese bus owners are proud of their vehicles. A Catholic shrine and a hand-painted vista of Valletta Harbour adorn the bulkhead of bonneted Ford ET7 DBY 399; few vehicles retain cab bulkheads. The ceiling-mounted cord bell is reminiscent of London and Glasgow and the waybill has been clipped beside the shrine, ready for one of the island's young inspectors to check. As usual on Maltese buses, there are no doors to the entrance and most doored buses run with them open.





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## BOOKS

### GLORY DAYS — FODEN

**BARRY S. WATSON. IAN ALLAN  
PUBLISHING 190MM X 245MM  
96PP. £15.99**

What I'm about to impart to you will be either good or bad news, depending on your view of the transport world. This book tells the story of Foden buses and coaches, but it's mainly about trucks. If you have even a passing interest in the heavy vehicles most closely related to buses and coaches, and especially if you have a weakness for the sweeping lines of bygone trucks from an age when their drivers were revered as knights of the road, then it should appeal.

Barry Watson's story, following the Glory Days format of a good mix of text, black and white and colour photographs, tells the Foden story from the company's formation as an industrial steam engineering manufacturer in 1877 right through to the collapse of the family-owned firm in 1980 and its acquisition by Paccar of Seattle.

The text is informative and the pictures are wonderful. There are some excellent recent colour shots of preserved Fodens on rally fields as well as colour views by the author showing examples at work in the 1950s and 1960s. The black and whites are a mix of archive and action views.

The bus and coach views cover the various periods when Fodens saw fit to venture into passenger transport, starting with a steam-powered example from the early years of the 20th century, a vehicle thought to have been the first mechanical transport for the company's renowned brass band. The bus story resumed in 1933 when the Gardner 5LW-engined Bandmaster coach was built and limited production of buses followed for the open market. These, as Barry Watson explains, were tough times for Fodens which was emerging from a family crisis that nearly sunk the business.

But Fodens' glory days as a bus manufacturer — such as they were — came between 1946 and 1956 when it tried to make up for the unfamiliarity of its name by creating distinctive designs. Like its bonneted half-cabs at a time when major manufacturers were still making buses with more old fashioned-looking exposed radiators, later by fitting two-stroke engines and making coaches with rear engines. None caught on in a big enough way for the company to stay in the market when truck demand began to pick up again, but as some of the pictures in this book reveal, what it lost in volume it more than made up for by the sheer difference in the appearance of its products. A spread of shots including a bare rear-engined chassis, a view of one with its engine covers up, of another three with Whitson observation coach bodies, a Mann Egerton 1952 half-decker and a more modest Metalcraft example says it all.

And although much of the story thereafter is about triumphs and setbacks with trucks, it does conclude with fitting mention of the rear-engined Foden-NC double-decker developed in the

1970s with Northern Counties when it looked like Leyland's plans for the double-deck market would rule out customer choice or a role for independent bodybuilders.

### TRAVELLERS' TALES FROM THE BORDERS

**FRED KENNINGTON. Northumbria House,  
35 Corbar Road, Stockport, SK2 6EP  
ISBN 0 9526496 2 4 240MM X 170MM  
88PP. £7.99**

The author/publisher subtitles this book as being 'about buses and people around Berwick upon Tweed'. As a border town, Berwick was where the territories of United Auto and Scottish Motor Traction met. Fred Kennington went to work from SMT from 1949 and this is a story not just of how the area was served by the major and some lesser operators, but of the personalities behind the operation and driving of the buses. For that alone, it provides an insight you don't always get from your average bus book.

### TWOPENNY SINGLE TO STARBECK — Early public transport in the Harrogate area

**TREVOR M. LEACH. WEST YORKSHIRE  
INFORMATION SERVICE 295MM X 210MM  
204PP. £14.99 (£17.49 including p&p from  
WYIS, 8 High Cote, West Riddlesden,  
Keighley, BD20 5DQ, cheques payable to  
T. M. Leach)**

For those who might be tempted to write off all of the new age of bus operators as uncaring of their heritage, let this book serve to try and change your mind. As the author acknowledges in his introduction, it would not have been written had Blazefield Holdings not passed some valuable historic documents into the safe keeping of the WYIS.

The WYIS, should you not be aware, was created 50 years ago to study the history of the old West Yorkshire Road Car company which passed on privatisation into the short-lived ownership of the AJS group before it sold parts of the company either to Blazefield or what then was the Rider Group. When the time came to quit the old head office in Harrogate, Blazefield chairman Giles Fearnley — who probably won't mind admitting to being an enthusiast himself — recognised that some ancient ledgers ought to find a more caring home than the nearest skip. They were passed to the WYIS and the publication of many of their contents in this book has also been achieved with an unspecified contribution from the company.

The book relates the story from the earliest horse-drawn buses of the late-1890s, through steam bus operation to petrol propulsion; it's also the story of the emergence of one dominant operator, the Harrogate Road Car Company which became Harrogate & District Road Car in 1924, following its acquisition by the Tilling & BAT conglomerate. It had been subject to takeover approaches from Harrogate Corporation before opting to stay then in the private sector. In

1927, it became West Yorkshire Road Car.

The book is packed with photographs of vehicles, people and documents, there are details of routes operated as well as maps, summaries of financial results and mileage returns. A veritable treasure trove for anyone interested in West Yorkshire Road Car and its predecessors or of the bus industry's passage through some of the most critical years of its development.

### IMAGES OF ENGLAND — GLOUCESTERSHIRE'S INDEPENDENT BUSES AND COACHES THE YEARS TO 1945

**COLIN MARTIN. TEMPUS PUBLISHING  
ISBN 0-7524-1736-3 235MM X 165MM  
128PP. £9.99**

Essentially a picture book with long captions and longer introductory sections, this is another tale of the rise of the bus, from horse by steam to the motor vehicle. The photographs have been collected from a wide range of sources and as the buses themselves weren't always the main subject of the pictures, they often depict the vehicles either in their operating environments or with heavy emphasis on the people who drove them or rode in them. The book benefits greatly from this and there are some splendid views of village outings, market days and flooded roads in a bygone rural England. At least one name ought to be familiar — the still thriving Pulham of Bourton-on-the-Water — even if your editor unintentionally mistyped it as Poulton's in his Cotswold Connection article a couple of months ago. Take this as the Cotswold correction — but do consider this book, too, as a possible addition to your library.

### THREE TRAM BOOKS

*At risk of being lynched by those readers who can't see beyond the virtues of rubber-tyred wheels, we've been looking at a trio of publications devoted to different aspects of the British street tram.*

### LONDON TRAMWAY TWILIGHT 1949-1952

**ROBERT J. HARLEY. CAPITAL TRANSPORT.  
255MM X 225MM 128PP. £18.95**

Produced to the high standards we've come to expect of Capital, this hardbound book is a joyful mix of well-informed text and excellent photography. As London's trams finished before the British gained access to readily available colour film, most of the pictures are black and white, but there are some stunning views of street scenes with all sorts of forgotten street furniture, cars, sidecars, fashions and human occupations, there are views behind-the-scenes and of the Kingsway Subway in action. Everyone will have their favourite pictures in this selection. Mine, for what it's worth, show a conductor perched precariously outside the top-deck of a tram in south-east London in one view



and, in another, passengers climbing out of the gloom of the Kingsway Subway towards the Aldwych. The few colour photographs in the introduction add to the effect.

### THE WEARING OF THE GREEN — REMINISCENCES OF THE GLASGOW TRAMS

**WILLIAM M. TOLLAN. ADAM GORDON.**  
295MM X 210MM 96PP. £12 (£14 including p&p from Adam Gordon, Priory Cottage, Chetwode, near Buckingham, MK18 4LB).

There have been many books about Glasgow's trams, the last in a big British city from 1962 until the early-1990s revival. This one is different from most. It's the memoir of an East End Glaswegian whose father was a corporation tram driver and who grew up to the sound of trams clanking past his tenement home. The title has a double edge, too, for it's not only about the uniform worn by the platform staff on Glasgow's trams and buses, but also alludes to the author's upbringing in the city's large Irish Catholic community. Strong on personal memories and atmosphere and well-illustrated, too.

### THE MILLENNIUM GUIDE TO TRAMS IN THE BRITISH ISLES

**DAVID VOICE. ADAM GORDON.**  
210MM X 145MM 96PP. £10

As the title implies, this is a comprehensive guide of where to find working trams in these islands, from Croydon Tramlink to the Manx Electric Railway, to the working and static museums and model tram layouts. The title stretches even to include the Docklands Light Railway and Glasgow Underground.

### MODELS

### ABC 1/76th SCALE GUY ARAB V, DENNIS JUBILANT, THORNYCROFT CYGNET and LEYLAND PLSC LION CHASSIS

ABC has gained itself a well-deserved reputation for producing some of the most superbly detailed diecast models on the market, even if their prices necessarily reflect that detail. They also are mainly of Hong Kong buses, for it is the thriving collectors' market there that supports such a superb range of castings.

This latest selection reminds us of just what makes ABCs so special. The Arab V is a

depiction of LX333, one of the 150 China Motor Bus single and double-deckers rebodied in 1982 with locally-assembled Alexander coachwork. There's a standard CMB-liveried version and another publicising the busfanworld website. Both come complete with a driver, an opening bonnet, partially-open tropical windows and little details like destination screen handles, door rails and window bars.

The Jubilant is DS6, one of 30 bought by CMB in 1980 and is similar to the Leyland Victory 2 reviewed in 1999 by John Lidstone. Our review model is in a purple driver recruitment livery. The detail is much as on the Arab V, but instead of an opening bonnet which would be a tad tricky on a vehicle whose front engine is next to

the entrance, the cab door slides open and the front wheels steer.

Like the Tilling-Stevens reviewed in June, the Thornycroft is a historic model, depicting one of 15 single-deckers delivered to CMB in 1938-40. It comes on a display plinth and working features are an opening driver's window, bonnet lid and steerable front wheels.

The PLSC Lion chassis marks a new departure in the diecast market, showing just a bare chassis of this highly influential 1926 single-decker. A bodied version is apparently on its way.

*This month's reviews by ALAN MILLAR*



*Top:*  
ABC's Guy Arab V/Alexander comes complete with opening bonnet within the lifelike semi-enclosed half-cab layout.

*Above:*  
Working features of the Dennis Jubilant are its sliding cab door and steerable front wheels.

*Far left:*  
The 1938 Thornycroft Cygnet comes with a display plinth, but can be detached if you prefer.

*Left:*  
The PLSC Lion chassis, like most ABC models, has its own driver.





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地點: 統一碼頭

MODEL: GUY ARBA IV  
ITEM NO: 200800A1

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MODEL: GUY ARBA IV  
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B 0101/BJan/d



# SERVICE *Extra*

One of the points I was making about the tram last month was that if I, a regular user and supporter of public transport, couldn't work out how to use the ticket machine, what chance Mondeo Man? Clive D'eath wrote to me recently making a similar point. Clive, another of us not unfamiliar with the ways of our industry, nevertheless found himself on a coach service that he had not intended to use; this time the confusion was produced by a plethora of brands — and Clive seems to have picked a day when AirLinks for once had the correct branded vehicles on the relevant services.

The confusion intensifies when a vehicle branded for one service turns up on another. This is great fun for enthusiasts but not really for anyone else — and perhaps it's one of those occasions to take photos discreetly. Heathrow is the national centre for branded services and AirLinks is not the only operator to turn out incorrectly-liveried vehicles, but as the major company there, it can create the impression that it is the major confuser.

## Dutch-style confusion

If you are interested in potential confusion, then the Netherlands is worth a visit. Re-organisation of the industry is leaving a few large operators running vehicles in a kaleidoscope of previous liveries and certain once-unified services are still branded as such but operated jointly. Fortunately in all this, the co-ordination, with timetabled bus/bus and bus/train connections for which the Dutch industry was famous, is surviving — at the moment.

A familiar name — Arriva — appears on the yellow, blue, green and red buses in the north of the country and in the city of Groningen a few vehicles in the familiar stone and aquamarine mingle with the others to confound non-believers. I'm not certain how much of an impact they or the other big new amalgamation, Connexxion, has yet made; my one Arriva journey was part of the express Interliner network which it shares with Connexxion and which are still branded identically.

A Dutchman suggested to me that Arriva was a multinational intent only on making money but he may not be typical and it has to be said that others I know used to knock the old system, which had its faults but was pretty fantastic really. Indeed, Dutch public transport still is. I managed to plan a circular trip from Amsterdam through Groningen using the nationwide website and execute it with no delays on the very stormy 30 October. The only Arriva-liveried vehicles were new mega-long buses and Bendibuses plus one ex-Groningen municipal and one ex-railway bus and I never felt I was in either Woking or Stafford

## Surreal in Auckland

An altogether more surreal experience awaited me in New Zealand in June. It was a little disconcerting to arrive on the other side of the world and find a familiar livery on nearly all the buses. My one sampling of Stagecoach Auckland found a very helpful driver who seemed to decide to charge me some discount fare for my walking stick and took me beyond the terminus to avoid my walking up a steep hill.

But his method of stopping the bus by maximum last minute use of the brakes was rather wearing. I know this was not typical NZ bus driving because I had spent seven hours on long-distance coaches the day before. And I know sometimes rough riding is the fault of the road or the bus; I remember when I was working for Southdown in Worthing in 1970, travelling home on a Bristol RESL that was going vertical at every halt and I was beginning to wonder about the

Confused brandings and bouncing bags excite JULIAN OSBORNE's attention in this month's account of his bus rides at home and abroad

driver, whom I did not know. Aware I was a company employee, he whispered in an embarrassed fashion as I got off 'I only have to breathe on these brakes'.

But there do seem to have been quite a few heavy feet about this year. Alan Mortimer (*Buses* August) mentioned some London drivers' 'bucking bronco' approach to stops, a phenomenon I reported some years ago and if you can get my bus enthusiast bag (you know, grubby notebook, several pens, bottle of Tizer etc) off the seat you are doing some interesting bus driving. This has been achieved once or twice of late but before I name the companies involved, I must note that, having successfully got said bag into the 'passenger cabin' of two silver Jetlinks (ex-Cambridge Coach Services) this year, neither driver came anywhere close to dislodging it.

## Bags I Eastern Counties

Not so a First Eastern Counties once a day service I took into Rendlesham Forest for a brilliantly arranged rendezvous with the rest of the family (thank you Suffolk County Council for your excellent website). Not only did this bus get my bag in mid-air, it actually got me in mid-air as it bounced at speed along an unclassified road not that far from Ipswich (less thanks to Suffolk County Council for its contribution here).

A few weeks later, Yorkshire Traction managed to do the same thing to my bag, but not me, with an emergency stop at Leeds station; this was perhaps partly aided by an inconveniently placed road hump. On the other hand I'm quite certain that had I not held on to my bag, the Aircoach driver I caught into Dublin soon after would have got it on the floor with no help from the road whatsoever. At every halt, the coach virtually stood on end. Dublin Bus got itself a lot of bad publicity in its week-long strike in March but the driver of the Olympian I caught back to the airport stopped it properly throughout and charged me a fraction of the Aircoach fare.

Seen that somewhere before? An Arriva-liveried ex-municipal Mercedes-Benz O.405G articulated bus in rainswept Groningen — sandwiched between a paratransit minibus and a bus in the colours of the Dutch city. JULIAN OSBORNE





## BUSES



# MANCHESTER MUSEUM'S CHRISTMAS CRACKER

The Manchester Museum of Transport held its annual pre-Christmas event over the weekend of 2/3 December. Entitled the Christmas Cracker, the popular event saw the museum descended upon by a multitude of traders selling all the usual rally fare, joined on the Sunday by a small number of visiting buses. Always well attended, the Cracker was even more so this year, and the two buses maintaining a service between the museum and the New Century Hall, Victoria, venue of the annual model railway exhibition, were hard-pushed to shift the crowds.

In use this year were Bury 116, a 1963 Metro-Cammell-bodied Leyland PDR1/1, on long-term loan to the museum from Greater Manchester PTE, and Ashton 44, a Roe-bodied Leyland PD2/37, delivered two years later.

Visitors on the Sunday included the newly restored former West Midlands Ailsa B55-10 no4738, looking truly magnificent, and equally eye-catching former GMPTE MCW Metrobus 5161, now in daily use with independent Finches of Wigan. Also there were SELNEC Preservation Society's Northern Counties-bodied Leyland PDR1A/1 EX1, and its exhibition bus Daimler Fleetline CRG6LXB/Northern Counties 7206.



## RALLY DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Thank you to all of the rally, running day and museum organisers who have already sent in details of their 2001 events for inclusion in our annual guide. There's still time to send in information for the free guide which will be issued with *March Buses* — see page 9 for address and faxing details — but please do make sure that this reaches the Editor's Glasgow address by Friday 5 January.

Meanwhile, you may care to note that the East Sussex Transport Preservation Group will be celebrating 100 years of PSV operation in Bexhill-on-Sea with a vintage bus rally and running day on **Sunday 8 July**. The event runs from 10.00 to 17.30 at the Downs, Bexhill with a transport bazaar and exhibition at the Bexhill Museum in Egerton Road. The event will include the return to public display of a Leyland PD2 after five years' major restoration by the ESPTG, and there will be a free connecting bus service linking Bexhill Museum with Cooden Beach railway station and various other points in the town.

For details and entry forms, contact the secretary at 33 Harold Road, Hastings, TN35 5NJ, phone 01424 435483.

Amberley Museum's rally and bus riders day has been fixed for **Sunday 16 September** and is to be restricted to AEC buses and coaches this year. More details of this event from Alan Lambert at 7 Nursery Close, Emsworth, Hants, PO10 7SP.

Even farther into the future, Steve Milner of the Lincolnshire Vintage Vehicle Society tells us plans are already being laid for open days in 2003 and 2004 to celebrate, respectively, the 75th anniversaries of the formation of Lincolnshire Road Car and Lincoln City Transport. If you can help with memorabilia or plain and simple memories, call him on 01522 689497.



**Top:**  
The two SELNEC double-deckers alongside Finches' Metros and the newly restored West Midlands PTE Volvo Ailsa — one of 50 built in the mid-1970s to augment Fleetline deliveries.  
pictures by PHILIP LAMB

**Above left:**  
The former Bury Leyland Adonis with Liverpool-style Metro-Cammell bodywork was one of the vehicles used on the shuttle service to the model rail show.

**Above:**  
Roe-bodied Ashton Leyland PD2/37 No.44, also used for the shuttle service, is actually two years newer than the Bury Adonis.



I'm pleased to advise that reports can now be sent by e-mail. Please send text messages only — please do not include pictures or attachments. The address is: [fleetnews@lineone.net](mailto:fleetnews@lineone.net)

## AC Travel, Speke

Ex-Arriva Merseyside Leyland Atlantean AN68B/1R/Alexander H43/32F ACM 726/7/57/8X have been acquired as has Noge-bodied MAN tri-axle coach T178 SUT from Bingley Coaches.

## ASD Coaches, Strood.

Acquired is ex-Greater Manchester MCW Metrobus ANA 190Y, latterly Ensign, Purfleet 190.

## Geoff Amos, Eydon, Northants

Deliveries are of Dennis Dart SLF/Caetano Compass B42F 94-98 (X194-8 FOR) in a yellow livery with 'The Great Central ConneXion' branding for a new hourly service linking Banbury, Woodford Halse, Daventry and Rugby.

After 30 years of Bedford operation, the last, YNT/Duple B63F 50 (A140 TNV), was sold in August to Stuart, Carlisle along with unique Reeve Burgess B71F-bodied Dennis Dorchester SDA807 B368 KNH. Two rarities still running are Dorchester/Wadham Stringer B71F 54/5 (D957 ENH, E913 PNV), but Caetano-bodied Dorchester coaches SJI 3928/9 (F875/6 TNH) have been replaced by Dennis Javelin/Berkhof C51Ft 91-93 (W1-3 GAC).

## Arriva Colchester AA

Leyland Olympian 5380 (TPD 110X) entered traffic in October. Leyland Tiger 4303 (OHE 280X) has rejoined 4302 at Arriva Fox County. Greenways 3305/8 (JIL 2195 JOX 477P, NIW 6508 GUA 821N) and Leyland Swift/Wadham Stringer B39F 3335 (H350 PNO) have been transferred to East Herts & Essex.

## Arriva Cymru AA

More new Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton MPD B27F are SMC273/4 (X273/4 RFF).

Optare Excel 2 demonstrator W438 CWX was on loan at Llandudno Junction and Caego and Optare Solo demonstrator V941 KAG was used. Meanwhile, acquisitions comprise Leyland Olympian ONLXB/1R/ECW H45/32F DOG228 (AEF 228Y) from Arriva North East; another ex-MTL Leyland Atlantean AN68D/1R/Alexander H43/32F, DAL143 (A143 HLV), from Arriva North West; Mercedes-Benz 709D/Plaxton Beaver B27F MMM776 (K876 UDB) from Arriva North West; MMM840/3/6 (R110/3/6 TKO) from Arriva Southern Counties.

Withdrawals are of Leyland Lynxes SLG256/8 (E256/8 TUB, SLC290 (F290 AWW), shortlived ex-MTL Atlantean DAL144 (A144 HLV) and Mercedes 709Ds MMM981/3 (K982/3 UGY), this pair passing to Fleetlink, Mossley (dealer) along with SLG258.

## Arriva Derby AA

City Rider livery remained only on Fleetlines 4310-3, Volvo Citybuses 4336/9/40/2-51/3/78/80/2 and Volvo Olympians 4666/8/9 by mid-October.

Mercedes-Benz Vario 1172 (R768 DUB) and Scania 2189/90 (N429/30 XRC) have been transferred to Arriva Fox County while Mercedes 811D 1362 (G124 TJA) has come here from Fox County.

Volvo Ailsas 4111/4/8-21 (SRC 111/4X, TCH 118-21X) were withdrawn by mid-October along with Leyland Fleetline 4308 (GTO 48V). Mercedes-Benz 609D 1289 (F389 UCP) is in use as a driver trainer.

## Arriva East Herts & Essex AA

Iveco Turbo Daily 59.12/Marshall B27F 2092/6/7 (M152/6/7 RBH), Leyland National Greenway B41F 3048 (BAZ 6869, J7U 5777), Dennis Dart/Carlyle B40F 3092/6 (H923 LOX, H243 MUK) and Leyland Olympian ONTL11/1R/Roe H43/29F 5072 (A152 FPG) and similar but ECW-bodied 5080 (B271 LPH) have been transferred from Arriva the Shires & Essex while Greenways 3305/8 (JIL 2195 JOX 477P, NIW 6508 GUA 821N) and Leyland Swift/Wadham Stringer B39F 3335 (H350 PNO) have come from Colchester.

The ex-Town & Country Darts are numbered 3400-3 (R301-3 NGM) while Metrobuses KYV 756/82X, C404 BUJ are 5256/62/54. As noted above, Leyland Olympian 5380 (TPD 110X) has entered service in Colchester. As previously reported it was refurbished here and not dismantled for spares as suggested in the November issue. However 5371 (TPD 101X) has gone to Hardwick, Carlton, and Mercedes-Benz 709D/Reeve Burgess Beaver 2315-7 (J935-7 WHJ) have gone to Houston Ramm (dealer). Similar 2313 (J933 WHJ) has been withdrawn.

## Arriva Fox County AA

Receipts are of Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/3R/Duple Dominant IV C53F 3005 (OHE 274X) from Arriva Colchester, based at Stamford, Tiger TRCTL11/3R/Plaxton Paramount 3200 C57F A152 EPA from Arriva the Shires & Essex and DAF SB3000/Van Hool Alizée 3205 (P204 RWR) for National Express work.

Arriva East Herts & Essex recently took over the commercial bus services of Purfleet-based Town & Country along with four Plaxton Pointer-bodied Dennis Dart SLFs new to Q Drive. 3402 (R302 NGM) is seen at Lakeside shopping centre. RICHARD GODFREY

The driver training fleet now incorporates ex-Derby Scania K92/Alexander 2181 (E21 ECH) as well as Leyland Lynx 2137 (F275 AWW) from Arriva Yorkshire and Leyland Titan/Park Royal 4535 (EYE 245V) from Merseyside.

A summary of renumberings may be appropriate at this stage:

Mercedes-Benz Varios M101-10/12-71 become 1101 etc  
Mercedes-Benz 609D M289 is now 1289  
Mercedes-Benz 709D M303-26/9-31/3/6-9/41-4-60/3-6/9-71 are now 1303 etc  
Mercedes-Benz 709D M372 is now 1393  
Mercedes-Benz 811D M362/90 are now 1362/94  
Leyland Tigers 2, 4, 9, 19-22 are now 3002 etc  
DAF 153 is now 3153  
DAF SB3000s 209/10 are now 3209/10  
Volvo B10Ms 211-4, 0233-5, 236 are now 3211-4/33-6  
Volvo Citybus 4654/5 are now 4354/5  
All other fleetnumbers are unchanged.

At mid-October, Midland Fox livery was retained by 709Ds 1304/8/9/11/3/4/29/36/7/41/9, double-deck Scania 4151/2, Leyland Olympians 4480/1/6/9/91-4 and 4510; Urban Fox colours were worn by Varios 1106-10/2/31, Leyland National Greenways 2159-63 and double-deck Scania 4168.

Mercedes 811D 1362 (G124 TJA) has been transferred to Derby.

Disposals are of 609D 1282 (E62 UKL), 709Ds 1301/2/32/5/42/3 (F301/2 RUT, G64/5 RNN, G142/3 GOL), 811Ds 1361/7/8/95/95/6 (G104 TND, G125 TJA, G106 TND, J401 FNS, F572 OPX), National Greenways 2147/50 (JIL 2190, SIB 1378), DAF coach 3087 (LJI 8157), Volvo B10M 3237 (F407 DUG), Leyland Olympians 4478/87/534 (D80 UTF, ACM 707X, WDC 217Y).

I'd like to thank Andrew Bartlett for his reports over the years, and wish him well in his new job.

## Arriva London AA

LOTS reports that 20 Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointers are due. PDL19-28 (X519, 471, 521-4, 475, 526/7, 478 GGO) are for Arriva London South at Beddington Farm and PDL29-38 (X529, 481, 531-4, 485, 536-8 GGO) for Arriva London North East at Barking and Rainham, Essex.

Dennis Darts DRL201-9 (N701-9 GUM) are on loan to Blue Triangle until next March. More MCW Metrobuses withdrawn are London North M317, 1154, 1316 (EYE 317V, B154 WUL, C316 BUJ). M602/34 (GYE 602W, KYV 634X) have gone to PVS, Barnsley, for scrap and M644, 1217 (KYV 644X, B217 WUL) have gone to Halifax Joint Committee via Ensign, Purfleet (dealer), while M317, 1154 (EYE 317V, B154 WUL) have also gone to Ensign and M1086-91 (B86-91 WUL) have moved to Arriva North East.

Interesting additions for next season's Original London Sightseeing Tour operations are seven of the Hong Kong tri-axle MCW Metrobuses imported by Ensign. They are ex-New World First Bus ML47, 50/4/7-9, 63 (D 7256, D 154, 3460, 8346, 8506, 741, 2896) and have not yet been registered in the UK, but were delivered to Derby on 15 November for conversion into half open-toppers.

Metrobus MB633 (KYV 633X) is now PO31/18F (i.e. partial open-top) and is the Metrobus which has joined RM1919 on the Harrods tour.

## Arriva Midlands North AA

New here is Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer MPD 210 (X32 KON) for Winsford. Crewe's accident-damaged Leyland Olympian 1972 (A172 VFM) has been sold, apparently for scrap.

Withdrawals to note, courtesy of the PSV Circle, are of Mercedes-Benz 609D/Reeve Burgess B25F 127 (F77 ERJ), Mercedes 709D/Dormobile B25FL 138/9 (K403/4 VPK), Mercedes 811D/Reeve Burgess DP25F 403 (F822 GDT), 811D/Carlyle B31F 411 (G111 TND), 811D/Reeve Burgess B33F 413 (G901 MNS), 811D/Carlyle B33F 417 (G117 TND).

## Body type

A	Articulated
B	Single-deck bus
C	Coach
DP	Dual purpose, usually coach seats/bus shell
H	Double-decker
L	Lowbridge double-decker (ie with side sunken gangway upstairs. All other types, with conventional gangways are H [Highbridge] regardless of overall height)
O	Open-top
CO	Convertible open-top

## Seating capacity

(For double-deckers this is shown with the upper-deck capacity first, eg 43/30, indicating 43 'over' 30. Where these are not known a total figure is given)

## Door position

F	Front
R	Rear
C	Centre
D	Dual doors

When platform doors are fitted where these would not normally figure, usually on rear entrance buses, this is indicated by D after the door position. The letter 'T' after the door indicates the provision of a toilet whilst L after the door position shows that a wheelchair lift is fitted.

## Re-registrations

Where a vehicle is re-registered its previous registration numbers follow in italic type, with the most recent given first where it has been registered more than once.

Vehicle reports should be sent to

J. G. Lidstone, 76 Thames Drive, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex SS9 2XD.

Please mark your envelope 'Fleet News'.





811D/LHE Commuter B31F 432 (H132 CDB), 811D/Carlyle B33F 442 (H112 DDS, IIB 6819, H728 LOL) and ex-Citybus Leyland Lynx LX5636LXCTFR/Alexander N-type B53F 1006 (HXI 3006).

Of these, 127/38/9, 413/32/42 and 1006 went to Midland PSV Sales, Rugeley which also has taken Talbot Freeways 35/6 (H905 YUS, H116 YSU) and Leyland Nationals 873/8, 901 (GMB 373/8T, TOF 701S), while Linkstart, Craven Arms has taken Nationals 890, 917 (GMB 390T, JOX 517P), possibly for spares.

## Arriva North East/Northumbria AA

New are DAF SB3000/Van Hool Alizée C44F 143/4 (X143/4 DNL) for Northumbria, which has also had dual-door Volvo B7TL/Plaxton President demonstrator X157 JOP on loan. More H43/28D Metabus DR134/1s from Arriva London are B86-91 WUL.

Further to the new deliveries recorded in *Buses* November Tees & District has Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer MPD B29F 1753-6 (W754/6-8 SBR) and DAF SB120CS/Wright Cadet B39F 1912-22 (W315/7/9 PPT, W69, 72/6/8/9, 81-3 PRG) while Teesside has MPD B29F 1757 (W759 SBR) and DAF SB120CSs 1907-11 (W309/11-4 PPT).

Internal transfers are Optare Vectas 1516/7 (K516/7 BHN), DAF SB220/ikarus 4085-7 (J931 CYL, J413/4 NCP) and Leyland Olympians 7215/68 (WDC 215Y, C288 XEF) from Tees to Durham County and Optare Deltas 4002/4/11-5/83/4 (G210/2 HCP, K411-5 BHN, F792 DWT, G785 PWL) from Teesside also to Durham County, but Vectas 1525/31/2/54 (L525/31/2 FHN, M503 AJC) and MetroRider 2601 (L601 FHN) have transferred from Durham County to Teesside and Delta 4103 (H262 CFT) and Olympian 7286 (UWW 13X) from Durham County to Northumbria. Meanwhile DAF SB220/Plaxton Prestiges 4047/8 (S347/8 KHN) have moved from Teesside to Tees & District. Vectas 1555/6 (M504 AJC, UOI 772) from Tees & District to Northumbria and Dennis Dart MPD 1743-5 (V743-5 ECU) from Northumbria to Teesside. Some of these changes were prompted by the problems with the Mercury Bridge over the River Swale at Richmond, reported in *Buses* October. Richmond's two double-deckers have gone to Redcar, and it now has Vectas and two MetroRiders. Berwick officially has an all-Optare MetroRider allocation.

The Eden fleetnames have been removed from Leyland Lynxes 5001/2 (G508/9 EAJ).

Withdrawals see the end of North East's Leyland Nationals, with National 2s 3764/6/73 (XUA 74X, EWT 206Y, NTU 13Y), the end of Northumbria's Bristol LHs, of which the last were LH6Ls 193-6 (LPT 701/7T, MUP 712T, AFB 593V), and also the last Northumbria Leopard, 239 (SND 296X). Northumbria also has only one Bristol VR left, 540 (CPT 738S) at Hexham. Other withdrawals are Leyland Olympians 7204/18/25/8/38/52/89 (XWX 479X, WDC 218Y, AEF 225/8Y, A238 GHN, B252 PHN, CUB 61Y) and, from Northumbria, Leyland Tigers 221/2/50 (YOT 607, VAY 879, EDZ 215), 1416 (B114 GRR), Leyland Olympian 7319 (SPY 205X) and Leyland National 2 driver trainer 9992 (UBR 110V). National 2s 3143, 3761-3/6-8/70/4 (RHG 882X, VBG 93V, XUA 72/3X, EWT 208-10Y, BPR 49Y, NTU 15Y) all passed to North East Bus Breakers, Annfield Plain (dealer) and Olympian 7228 (AEF 228Y) is now with Arriva Cymru. Bristol VRs 786, 824/92 (SGR 786V, MEF 824W, PWR 442W) were earmarked for export to the United States by British Double Decks, Euxton, but this fell through at a late stage.

I'm grateful to Chris Atkins and John Buckle for pointing out that the former United depot at Northallerton, Brompton Road has not been demolished — no doubt significant work (a new left-hand wall and roof being fitted) for its refurbishment being mistakenly observed. It continues in use as a tyre and exhaust centre.

**X195 FOR**, one of five super Dart SLFs with Caetano Nimbus bodies bought for the Great Central ConneXion loads at Woodford Halse.

ANDY IZATT



January 2001

# FLEET IN FOCUS

**FLEET:** Geoff Amos Coaches

**BASED:** Woodford Road, Eydon, Daventry, Northants

**FOUNDED:** 1954 by Geoff Amos using a minibus to transport skittles and darts teams to their matches. It grew with the purchase of three neighbouring firms, G. T. Owen & Son of Upper Boddington in 1972, G. M. Morris of Rugby during 1975 and, most recently, Taylor & K. W. Coaches of Daventry in 1980. The Daventry base in Long March Industrial Estate was sold in 1997 with the whole fleet now being based at enlarged premises in Eydon. Geoff Amos died during 2000, but his son Brian and daughter Shirley continue to run the limited company.

**WHERE DOES IT OPERATE?:**

Eydon is close to Northamptonshire's borders with Warwickshire and Oxfordshire. Core local routes operated have been combined into a new hourly service called the Great Central ConneXion which involved all three local authorities as part of a successful Rural Bus Challenge bid. Launched on 4 September, the new facility links Banbury and Rugby via Woodford Halse and Daventry. Particular attention has been given to serving local hospitals, a prison and the railway stations at Banbury and Rugby.

It operates private hires, school contracts, its own day excursions and tours and also organises British and European trips to order and for holiday operators including Diamond Short Break Holidays, Schools into Europe, Eurotravel & Events and the Hilton Stakis Hotel Group.

**LIVERY:**

Lilac and mushroom were enhanced by white and silver in more recent years, but three new air conditioned Berkhof Axial 50-bodied Dennis Javelins at the beginning of last year introduced a new gold scheme for coaches with splashes of lilac, purple and blue. Five Caetano Nimbus 11.4 metre Dart SLFs for the Great Central ConneXion introduced a yellow and blue bus livery with black window surrounds for the bus operation.

**HOW MANY VEHICLES?:**

The company's O-licence allows for 23 vehicles. There are currently 26 of which three, a Bova Europa, a Tiger and an Atlantean, are for sale.

**MOST UNUSUAL VEHICLE:?**

Geoff Amos was a pioneer of high capacity single-deckers. Following the purchase of four Duple Dominant bus-bodied Bedford bought new in 1976, 1978, 1980 and 1983 which seated either 63 or 66, the firm acquired in 1984 what was then the UK's highest capacity single-decker, a 71-seat Reeve Burgess-bodied Dennis Dorchester; it was bought for a Watford Gap motorway services staff contract, but regularly appeared on local service work. Two newer Wadham Stringer-bodied Dorchester 71-seaters, remain and one of these was a former Dennis demonstrator. A unique pair of Caetano Algarve Dorchesters left the fleet earlier this year. The double-deck fleet includes JWF 47W, the Roe bodied Atlantean bought new by Limebourne for London tours and bought from Eastbourne Buses; it is currently for sale. A rare DAF SB2300 Smit Euroliner coach came from Adkins Coaches of Boddington when that operation closed three years ago.



D957 ENH, one of Geoff Amos Coaches' two 71-seat Wadham Stringer-bodied Dennis Dorchesters.

ANDY IZATT



# FLEET FACT

## AUTOBUS

The bodybuilder that trades today as Autobus has been part of the Optare Group since 1996, but has a slightly longer history. The story begins in 1989 when former MCW and Reeve Burgess personnel moved to Europa, a Doncaster minibus builder, and provided it with the expertise to start making coachbuilt buses and coaches. Yorkshire Traction, PMT and Brighton Buses were some of the customers for its Enterprise body on Mercedes-Benz and Renault chassis. After Europa collapsed in 1991, the business was acquired by Crystals but some of the key people also formed a new company called Autobus Classique which focused its efforts more on the coach market, primarily with the Nouvelle midi. The Classique part of the name was dropped after Optare took over. Autobus has been based in Rotherham since its formation and under new ownership it has moved into larger premises there which are also used for Optare's after-sales and manufacturing divisions.

As we report this month, Arriva Northumbria's last Bristol LH6L/ECW buses have been withdrawn. 196 (AFB593V) of 1980, new to Bristol Omnibus and inherited with the break-up of United Auto in 1986, was photographed earlier this year alongside Bristol VRT 541 (CPT 739S) of 1978.

JEFF TATTERSALL

## Arriva North West/Merseyside AA

Further to last month's report, the order for 59 Dennis Dart SLFs is made up of 50 with Plaxton Pointer B38F bodies and nine with Alexander ALX200. Pointers noted in service by October were 2201-8/13/4/21/3 (X201 ANC etc), while further Volvo B6BLE/Wright Crusader 2 B39F delivered by November were 2813-22 (X813-22 AJA). An additional 66 new buses are due in the first part of 2001. Further withdrawals are expected to take 250 older vehicles out of the fleet to reduce its average age to six years instead of 11 as at present.

Another acquisition from Arriva London is Dennis Dart 9SD/Reeve Burgess B35F 1113 (J313 WHJ) from pool stock.

Further renumbering has seen Merseyside Leyland Titans 2211/3 (CUL 211/3V), 2232/4/9/47 (EYE 232V etc) become 2011 etc and North West Leyland Nationals 208/9 (BYW 430/2W) become 6208/9. Although these and many other buses have recently been renumbered on paper, they may not all carry their new identities until such time as they are repainted.

More Merseyside buses sold to Goodwin, Carlton (dealer) are Leyland Titans 2158 (CUL 158V) and 2427/520 (KYV 427, 520X), Leyland Atlanteans 3009 (A329 GLV), 3017/37 (A97, 117 HLV), 3907/8 (XEM 907/8W), 3918/22/3/9 (ACM 718X etc) and 3975 (DEM 775Y), and Leyland National 2s 6103/22 (VBG 103/22V), 6154 (XLV 154W) and 6171/2 (CKB 168/9X). Atlantean 3063 (A143 HLV) is another to pass to Arriva Cymru, apparently on loan.

Withdrawals from the North West fleet are of Leyland Nationals 428/30 (OOX 805/9R) and ex-Timeline Volvo B10M/Alexander Q-type B55F 787/8 (H87, 588 VMV).

## Arriva Southern Counties AA

London-style garage codes have been noted on Arriva West Sussex MCW Metrobuses recently, with traditional CY (Crawley) supplemented by new WS (Warnham Station yard) on cabsides and adjacent to entrance doors. Running numbers appear on yellow cards displayed in windscreens.

Vehicles awaiting disposal are Metrobuses M395, 417, 557 (GYE 395, 417, 557W), Leyland National Greenways 374/80 (PDZ 6274, LIL 2180), Mercedes 709Ds 464, 1351 (M464 JPA, N351 YKE), Optare MetroRider 1978 (L838 MWT) and driver trainers P9 (AKP 430T), a Plaxton Supreme-bodied Bedford YMT, P41 (LSK 641, KGS 444Y), a Plaxton Paramount-bodied Leyland Tiger and Leyland Leopard/Alexander ZDT004 (OLS 540P). Unusual Caetano Stagecoach-bodied Volvo B10M VCB089 (C89 NNV) — now a driver trainer at Nunbury Wells ('Fleet News' December 1999), has been renumbered ZDT89. Mercedes-Benz 709D/Carlisle 1204 (H204 EKO) has been sold.

## Arriva the Shires & Essex AA

National Greenway 3049 (RJI 6861, HMA 569T) and Leyland Olympian/ECW 5055 (ARP 617X) have been withdrawn. Vehicles transferred out are Leyland Tiger/Plaxton Paramount 4002 (A152 EPA) to Arriva Fox County, and Iveco Turbo Daily/Marshall 2092/6/7 (M152/6/7 RBH), National Greenway 3048 (BAZ 6869, JTV 5777), Dennis Dart/Carlisle 3092/6 (H923 LOX, H243 MUK) and Leyland Olympians 5072/80 (A152 FPG, B271 LPH) have all gone to Arriva Herts & Essex. Leyland Olympians 5058/66 (ARP 618X, BPF 136Y) have been sold to Hardwicks, Carlton and Dormobile-bodied Mercedes 709D 2063 (K203 FEH) to Gale (dealer), Harlow.

## Ashalls Coaches, Clayton

A new delivery is MAN 18.350/Neoplan Transliner C49Ft X301 AKY, convertible to C53F.

Acquisitions are of former Go North East Leyland Lynx/B47F F728/31 LRG, upseated to B51F after receipt for use on schools contracts. Also in use is Plaxton C53F-bodied Leyland Tiger USV 672 (FKL 172Y) from Freeway, Shaw, part-exchanged for Volvo B10M/Duple C49Ft E139 RSC.

Duple-bodied DAF D902 EAJ, Plaxton-bodied DAF E405 LPR, Caetano-bodied B10M WSU 891 and Duple-bodied Leyland Leopard PWB 660X have been sold. Regrettably, rare Duple-bodied Leopard open-top conversion RMS 396W has been sold for scrap.

## Aston, Killamarsh

The company name — previously Aston Express — has been simplified as reflected in the revised title this month.

The first X-registered vehicles to work in Chesterfield are new all-over white Dennis Dart SLF/Marshall Capital B37F X166-8 XNH, used on service 99 (Crystal Peaks-Calow, Royal Hospital). Dart/Plaxton Pointer B39F W689 TNV was only on loan from Dawsonrentals before delivery of the new Marshalls, and W558 JVV returned when they arrived. Mercedes-Benz Vario V376 SVV was also only on loan. After three years' use, Darts R529/31 YRP were repainted white and returned to Dawsonrentals.

V246 BNV is the second Dart to be fitted with a cycle rack.

DAF MB230s D636/8 WNU passed to Houston Ramm in part-exchange for MetroRider J945 JJR. Mercedes-Benz 811D/Optare StarRiders F39 CWY and G88, 99 KUB are due for early withdrawal and replacement by new Solos.

This modern fleet comprises Darts X166-8 BNH, V246/7 BNV, R566/7 YOT, Optare MetroRiders R91-4 UUA, J945 JJR, StarRiders F39 CWY, G88, 99 KUB and 608D C140 KVV. Lynx SIL 7486 and MCW Metrorider E874 NJO are held in reserve.

## Atherton Bus Company

Optare MetroRider H678 YGO is in service in a new livery of white with red skirt. ECW-bodied Leyland Leopards CHN 171X and UKE 828X have been withdrawn.

## Avon, Prenton, Wirral

Ex-Go Ahead North East MCW Metrobus H46/31F C761 OCN has been acquired via Ensign.

## Axe Valley, Seaton

MCW Metrobus DVK 489W is in use.

## Barfordian, Bedford

After 45 years based in Great Barford, this operator has moved from the village to new premises in Bedford.

Former Go North East MCW Metrobus MkII DR102/42/MCW A631 BCN is in stock and used on school contracts, still in Wear Buses livery.

An unusual acquisition is Dennis Dorchester/Wadham Stringer B59F FOD 943Y new to Tillingbourne and a new vehicle of interest is 10m Bova FHD10-370 W675 XNK, which replaced unusual Volvo B10M-46 (or B9M if you prefer)/Van Hool N660 EWJ (convertible to C36Ft), which passed to Eddie Brown, Helperby, North Yorkshire. Another rarity in stock is MAN MT8.136/G. C. Smith Whippet C25F C634 PSW.

## Beeston, Hadleigh, Suffolk

Happily, Neoplan Skyliner 524 FN (H699 DOD) is back in use after repairs to what turned out to be minor fire damage. The Leyland Leopard referred to in Buses November was AEG 984A.

## Bettabus, Liverpool

This new operator uses former Greater Manchester Leyland Atlanteans ANA 553Y and A698 HNB on services 12/13 (City Centre-Stockbridge Village).

## Blackburn Transport

The first ex-Lothian Leyland Olympian ONTL11/2R/ECW H50/31D numbered is 31 (OFS 684Y) with more due as 32-35.

The ex-Selkent Olympians acquired via Ensign, Purfleet are numbered 30 (D367 JJD), 41-45 (D141 FYM, D324 YNO, D133/44/5 FYM). The plan to convert these to single door has been shelved, and 31 is also to remain dual door. 41/2/4 are already in latest livery. While the Olympians were under preparation, further MCW Metrobuses M177 and M401 (BYX 177V, GYE 401W) were on loan.

It's worth noting that 30, new as D263 FYL, was later re-registered VLT 9 and its current registration is the reverse of that on Metroliner's Routemaster RML2367 (JJD 367D); 42 was originally D262 FYL and later became VLT 14. The London Olympians were expected to oust the OCN-X batch of Leyland Atlanteans at least in part, but additional school contracts have enabled these to stay until additional Olympians come. Atlantean 4 (DBV 144W) has been cannibalised and is to be scrapped.

I'm grateful to managing director Michael Morton for this update on his fleet.

## Blackpool Transport

The DAF SB220/Optare Delta refurbishment programme has been completed with former Fylde 133 (H3 FBT), its seating capacity being reduced from B48F to B46F in the process to match those new to Blackpool.

Meanwhile, Leyland Atlantean repaints continue — now something of a rarity with major operators. 331/6/44 (AHG 331/6V, GHG 344W) have been treated.

The last Volkswagen LT55/Optare CityPacer to leave Blackpool was 570 (E570 OCW), joining PD3 907 at Mac Tours in Edinburgh. 568 (E568 GFR) has been re-registered SIL 4783 with McKindless, Wishaw which, to clarify from last month, has amassed 567/8/71/4/6/8/9/82 (E567/8 GFR, F571/4/6/8 RCW, F579/82 WCW).

## Blue Triangle, Rinhham, Essex

Dennis Darts N701-9 GUM are on loan from Arriva London South. They have Plaxton Pointer B34F bodywork. Eight Caetano Nimbus-bodied Dennis Dart SLFs are on order.

## Bowers, Chapel-en-le-Frith

Another pair of new Optare Solo/B25F comprises X942/4 NUB, these being for general use and not route-dedicated as V110/20 LVH to service 442.

Another vehicle into Unibus livery for use to the High Peak College at Buxton is Leyland National SAE 751S. Leyland Fleetline OCU 804R, still in Cedar Coaches colours, has been withdrawn after a short stay here.

## Brighton & Hove GA

More Leyland Lynxes, 178/84-6/8/9 (F538/44-6 LUF, E448/9 FWV), have been sold to Stephensons, Rochford (dealer), leaving only 193 in service (outstationed at Piltodown for schools/Asda work) and 192/4/6 in store.

## Brijan, Southampton

Ex-Stagecoach East Kent MCW Metrobus MkII/MCW DPH43/27F 54/8 (F765/8 EKM) are in full Solent Blue Line livery for this operator's franchise work with that concern.

## Brylaine, Boston

Further to Buses October, the Plaxton-bodied Quest XAZ 1301 was originally registered A820 LEL. E903 DRG is a Ford R1114/Plaxton C53F built in 1975 but — extraordinarily — stored unregistered in dealer stock until 1988. Fifteen Fords remain in use here, almost certainly the largest number left in one fleet anywhere in the UK. Thanks go to the PSV Circle's P. C. Edwards for this item.

## Bu-Val, Smithy Bridge,

UVG-bodied Dennis Dart SLF R807 WJA is an acquisition for this Greater Manchester operator, ex-Universal, Chadderton.





## Caelloi, Pwllheli

Plaxton-bodied Dennis Dart T831 PNF is in use, thought on loan from Mistrall.

## Caistor, Romford.

Ex-London General Metrobus OJD 807Y has been acquired.

## Cardiff Bus

The first Leyland Lynx to be refurbished — and the first non-Dennis Dart to appear in the new green livery — is Mk 2 271 (J271 KDW).

Ex-Merseybus Volvo Ailsas 444-6 (A161-3 HLV) have been dedicated to a University of Wales Institute (UWIC) service and repainted in a dark blue special livery. Ailsas 439/41/2 all wear new overall advertising schemes, but with fronts in livery.

Surprisingly, Alexander-bodied Darts 028/9 (N28/9 OBO) have been withdrawn from normal service and relegated as permanent driver trainers, as has Optare MetroRider 188 (L188 DDW), this renumbered 088.

Withdrawn as a result of service cutbacks at the end of October were dual-purpose Mercedes-Benz 709Ds 010-3 (E830 ATT, F714 FDV, D405/8 KOD), MetroRiders 189-92 (L189-92 DDW) and DP Leyland Lynxes 237-40 (F237-40 CNY). MetroRider disposals are ex-trainer 066 (G166 HWO, ex-166) to Phoenix Travel, Bristol, 172/3 (H172/3 RBO) to Silcox, Pembroke Dock, 174/8 (H174 RBO, J178 WAX) to John's Travel, Merthyr Tydfil, 176/9-82 (J176 WAX etc) to Darwen Coaches, 177 (J177 WAX) to Globe, Aberdare while Scania N113DRBs 601/3-5/7 (G601 KTX etc) have gone to NIBS, Wickford. As reported in November, the rest of the Scania went to Stott, Oldham.

## Carter, Colchester

Former London Central Leyland Titan A63 THX is acquired and additionally, ex-Stagecoach Cambus Bristol VRT/SL3 PWY 37W has entered service. Optare MetroRider K168 FYG has been sold as has previously-withdrawn Leyland National EPD 540V.

## Cedar, Bedford

Current double-decker stock comprises Leyland Atlantean/Alexander 1, 6, 7, 13 (YJ1 1310, VCU 304T; AVK 181V, SCN 256/5S); East Lancs-bodied 8/9 (BTV 659/61T), Roe-bodied 10/2 (WAG 368X, KPJ 244W); Leyland Fleetline/Alexander 14 (YJ1 1317, KSW 62W) Bristol VRT/LL3/East Lancs 2/3 (UFW 38W, NFW 37V) and Alexander-bodied 11 (OSR 204R); Leyland Titan/Leyland 4 (A888 SYE); MCW Metrobus MkII/MCW 5 (A201 AKJ). Double-deckers are being repainted in all-over red, Atlanteans 7, 10 and 13 and Metrobus 5 being first.

## Childs, Kiveton Park

Two double-deckers in stock for schools work are Leyland Atlantean AN68A/1R/ECW H43/31F MBR 449T from Go North East and Alexander H45/29D-bodied JKW 302W from Mainline. Both are in GHC Coaches blue/cream livery.

## CMT Buses, Aintree

Another four new buses are Wright Renown B44F-bodied Volvo B10BLEs, 2066-9 (X114-7 JFV). Also acquired are 2070-4 (M388/9/1-3 VWX), ex-Harrogate & District Volvo B10B-58s with comparatively unusual Alexander Strider DP49F bodywork. CMT has 114 vehicles, 70 of them bought new in the past five years.

Connex Bus, London SE1

Eight further Alexander ALX400-bodied Dennis Tridents are on order for newly-won London Buses route 196, four Alexander ALX200-bodied Dennis Dart SLFs similarly for the 315, the latter as DA15-18 (X615-8 AWG), the Tridents to be Y-registered for April delivery.

Acquisitions for Lewes are Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer 2 DPL3-6 (W558 JVV, W689 TNV, S310 TMB, T418 MNH) and an ex-demonstrator SLF/Alexander has been numbered DAL74, its registration not reported.

Leyland National LS130 (THX 130S) has been sold to Imperial, Rainham.

## Dukes Travel, Glos

Dennis Dart SLFs R86 XNE and V896 DNB have been in use on loan from Mistrall Bus & Coach (dealer).

Leyland Lynx F293 GWW has been prepared for service and repainted. Leyland Royal Tiger 666 VHU is fitted with a Volvo engine and is apparently popular with its drivers.

MCW Metrorider E132 KYW has passed to Apollo, Cardiff.

## Dunn-Line, Nottingham

An addition to the front line corporate hospitality fleet is Plaxton Panther C32F-bodied Volvo B10M X461 KUT.

Leyland National 2 NL116L11/1R/B50F GTO 711V is in stock from Nottingham, repainted in a new white and lilac livery with 'dunnline.com' fleetnames.

## Eastbourne Buses

Optare Solo demonstrator W677 DDN was used briefly on service 8.

## Eastonways, Ramsgate.

Former London Metrobus KYV 800X has been acquired.

## East Yorkshire EY

Dennis Dart MPDs 466-81 are allocated to Scarborough, 461-5 based at Hull and Beverley. The Scarborough park-&-ride service has become more or less permanent and so the Optare Excels allocated have remained for this, also 584/6 have stayed as loadings on service 128 (Scarborough-Helmsley) now require double-decker capacity.

Volvo B10M 32 (EYD 1T) and Bristol VRs 721/90/6/9 and 995 (BPT 921S, RUA 450W, HWJ 931W, JYG 433V, WTU 487W) were reinstated to help out during the recent flood crisis and are held in reserve, while 730/75/7 (WRC 830S, XAK 903/10T) are active in the school contract fleet shared between Driffield and Scarborough. VR 519 (PAG 519W) continued a while longer in service until curtailed by engine failure.

I'm advised that 15 Leyland Atlanteans remain here — 889/90, 902/17-20/31-5/8/6/7.

An uncommon preservation candidate is Iveco 49.10/Robin Hood C16F 41 (D41 MAG), acquired by preservationist Ian Muir of Dorset, from Davian Coaches, Enfield.

## Ensign, Purfleet

Metrobus 149 (B149 EDP) has been sold to Kingston, Benfleet, and 190 (ANA 190Y) to ASD Coaches, Strood.

The current fleet comprises Metrobuses 128/38/46/7/9/52/7/9/60/7/92 (GOG 138W, A638 BCN, A146 AMO, B147 EDP, E749 SKR, E752 UKR, E747 SKR, C779/80 OCN, F767 FKM, F292 NHJ), 270 (GYE 570W), Daimler Fleetline DMS33 (EGP 33J) and AEC Regent III RT3775 (NLE 882), the last of which made a surprising appearance on South West Trains rail replacement work 50 miles from home, between Shepperton and Teddington, alongside Metrobuses, in November. Also owned, but not currently in service, are Metrobus MK2s A144 AMO and A644 BCN, and Regent III RT3232 which is having a major rebuild but will be returned to PSV use.

In its dealership capacity, Ensign has sold eight ex-Selkent L-class Leyland Olympians to Coach USA, and expects the remaining 32 it has in stock to follow them. As mentioned elsewhere, the first seven three-axle Metrobuses to be sold have gone to the Original London Sightseeing Tour and will be converted as partial open topers.

## Felix Bus Services, Stanley, Derbys

A new 10.7m Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer B39F is X711 GJU. It replaces Optare Sigma-bodied Dennis Lance M21 UUA.

## Finglands, Rusholme EY

Leyland Atlanteans 1749/60 (ANA 538Y, KPJ 286W) have been withdrawn.

## First Beeline FG

LOTS confirms that the new Dennis Dart SLF/ALX200 written off in the accident at Pooley Green level crossing was 236 (X236 AMO). Wright-bodied Dart DW89 (JDZ 2389) is another at First Provincial.

## First Bristol FG

Iveco TurboDaily 59.12/Mellor K922 VDV has been transferred from First Provincial.

Surprisingly in view of the transfer of much newer buses from Bristol to Manchester, ex-First Bradford Leyland Olympian ONLXB/1R/Roe H47/29F CUB 24/5/8, 31, 40/5Y, EWY 77Y have been transferred to CityLine and not Southern National, under whose heading they appeared last month.

## First Calderline FG

Another Metrobus DR102/23 H43/30F transferred from First Manchester is ANA 168Y.

### Group codes

AA	— Arriva Passenger Services
BL	— Blazefield Holdings
DG	— DelGro
EY	— EYMS Group
FG	— FirstGroup
GA	— Go-Ahead Group
NX	— National Express Group
SG	— Status Bus & Coach Group
ST	— Stagecoach Holdings
YT	— Traction Group



First Cymru has introduced this revised livery on the eight duplex 425 coaches operated on its M4 shuttle service.  
T. S. POWELL



## First Capital FG

Metrobus 353 (A892 SUL) has returned from First CentreWest, which has Volvo B6s 671-80 on loan.

## First CentreWest FG

Prototype East Lancs Vyking H41/22D-bodied Volvo B7TL VE953 (X578 RJW) was expected to enter service from Uxbridge on 11 November. Also new are 10.2m Dennis Dart SLF/Marshall B28D 381/2/5 (X381/2/5 HLR).

First Capital Alexander/Volvo B6s 671-80 (L671-80 RMD) are on loan at Orpington for park-&-ride work (671/3/5/6/8/9) and the rest at Westbourne Park. Metrobus M583 (GYE 583W) has been sold for scrap.

## First Cymru FG

Dennis Dart 9.8SDL 616 (N616 MHB) had received a new Plaxton Pointer B40F body by September. and was back in service at Bridgend.

Ex-Davies, Pencader Leyland Tigers 148/9 (2405, 7660 DD) have become driver trainers. DAF MB230 188 (F921 FCY) has gone to First Eastern Counties.

## First Eastern Counties FG

More Reeve Burgess Beaver B23F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709Ds from First Eastern National and Thamesway are 845 (H352 LJN), H308/38/65 LJN, H393 OHK; H365 LJN has since been sold to Erith Commercial (dealer).

DAF MB230LT/Plaxton C51Ft 18 (F921 FCY, 278 TNY, F200 EEP) has been acquired from First Cymru for Rosemary Coaches.

Former First Beeline Leyland Olympians F172/3/5/6 LBL and G55/6 XLO have been numbered 126/5/4/1-3, their haphazard numbers being allocated on delivery.

Mercedes-Benz Vario 812 (P812 REX) is another transferred to First Glasgow for high frequency city routes. Mercedes-Benz 609D/Frank Guy B20F transferred to First Midland Red include 929/36/8/9/58/60 (L259 PAH, M366/8/9 XEX, N618/20 GAH).

Flying Banana Freight Rover Sherpa/Carlyle B798/9 (D70 TLV, D227 OQJ) and Mercedes-Benz 811D/Alexander B877 (F633 XMS) have been withdrawn.

## First Eastern National FG

Acquisitions are Dennis Dart 9.8SDL/Plaxton B40F 2902/3/4/10 (M220/1, 450, 228 VWW) from First Leeds, 2902/10 at Chelmsford and 2903/4 placed in reserve.

Mercedes-Benz 709D 2601 (H601 OVW) has been allocated as a paint float vehicle, 2606/9 (H606/9 OVW) await disposal, but ex-Thamesway 346 (H356 LJN) has been retrieved to reserve from disposal. Another double-decker withdrawn is Bristol VR 3106 (UAR 596W) and Leyland Olympian 5001 (JTY 371X) in Phoenix dark blue/pink has gone to Thamesway at Hadleigh.

Further disposals to First Eastern Counties are of 709Ds 308/30/82 (H308/38 LJN, H393 OHK).

## First Hampshire FG

Further to last month, Provincial Dennis Dart 8.5SDL3003/Wright Handybus B30F 1351-5/8 (JDZ 2382-4/93/4/89) are those in stock from First CentreWest, 1351/2 entering traffic repainted in red/cream, but 1535-5 in First Beeline yellow/blue with orange trim.

Dodge Commando G13 969 (80 KF 65) has been acquired from the Ministry of Defence for conversion into a driver trainer.

Withdrawals of Iveco 59.12s continue with 252/61/8 (K920 VDV, L312/20 BDV) and also Mercedes-Benz 811Ds 702-5/96 (H176, 783/7 GTA, H991/7 FTT). However, 59.12 248 (K916 VDV) is reinstated.

Iveco 254 (K922 VDV) is with First Bristol, but Leyland Nationals 321/3 (RJT 147R, LTP 634R) have gone to Jordan, Portsmouth for scrap as has 811D 701 (H171 GTA).

New at Southampton are Optare Solo/B27F 731-3 (X731-3 FPO), in dedicated pale green livery for the former service 90, now branded as City Link. Articulated Volvo B7LA/Wright Eclipse Fusion AB56D 131-3/4/6-9/42/3 (W131-3 WPO, X134/6-9/42/3 FPO) are in service as a part of a programme to introduce 48 new Volvos here. They are the 15 Alexander-bodied B7TL double-deckers already reported, 15 Wright-bodied Volvo B10BLEs and 18 B7LA artics.

Fleetnumbers allocated to the Leyland Lynxes from First Beeline are LX112TL11ZR1/B49F 1095/6 (D751/3 DLO), LX112TL11ZR1/DP49F 1097 (D105 NDW) and LX2R11C1524S/B47F 1098/9 (K801/2 CAN).

The former service 91 (Rail Station-Red Funnel Terminal) has been rebranded as the City Loop and Dennis Dart 1329 (N329 ECR) is dedicated to this in a special orange livery. This and the 90 are sponsored free services and call at the new West Quay shopping complex.

The first gas bus to be withdrawn is Dart 2304 (G304 XCR) although this is officially still listed as defective rather than for disposal at this point.

MCW Metrobuses 530-2/6/7 (JHE 152/70/1W, JWF 495/6W) have passed to Hardwick, Carlton (dealer) for scrap.

## First Leicester FG

Former First Capital Mercedes-Benz 811Ds 731-3 (J631-3 HMH) are repainted in white and green livery and used on services 17/A.

First Mainline Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer B41F S534 UAK has been on loan with temporary fleetnumber 001, in exchange for Volvo B7TL 217 (W217 XBD).

Former Ipswich Dennis Falcon 628 (C108 SDX) has been withdrawn. Dennis Dominator 52 (TBC 52X) has been collected on tow for scrap by Wigley, Carlton (dealer), along with Renault S75s 702/10/4/84/6/8/91/3/5 with the rest of these unloved vehicles to follow suit.

## First Mainline FG

First Northampton Volvo Citybus/East Lancs Poyneer rebody 122 (WSU 481) has been on loan as part of an anti-vandal campaign touring schools and Volvo saloon 749 has been away at Northampton in exchange.

Another Volvo to be rebuilt as a double-decker by East Lancs is Mainline's own burnt-out Volvo B10M-55/Alexander saloon 677 (H677 THL), which has been taken away from Olive Grove by low-loader.

Wright-bodied Volvo B10BLE 864 (T864 MAK) suffered an electrical fire while in service, causing severe damage to the rear two bays and smoke damage to the remainder.

Rotherham's service 227 is back to mostly Dennis Dominator operation on weekdays and service 75 (serving Lakeside/Dome in Doncaster) has also gone double-deck after the allocated Volvo B6BLEs proved to have insufficient capacity.

Mercedes-Benz 147/9, Renault-Dodges 346/57/65/81 and further ex-Rider Group Leyland Olympian ONLXB/1R/Roe H47/29F 2607-10 (CUB 46, 65Y, EWW 81Y, A89 KUM but order to be confirmed) have been placed in reserve, but 140/1 and Dominator 2292 are back in service at Doncaster, 2604 (A105 KUM) at Olive Grove. Dennis Falcon driver trainer 7, 11, 631 (C107/11 SDX, YDX 100Y) have been renumbered 9100/1/3; 9101 was to replace Dominator trainer 9111 (KKU 115Y).

Former First Capital Dominators 2493-5 (F144 MBC, F294/1 PTP) remain stored and MCW Metrobuses 1960-8 (GYE 362/8, 523, 379, 484/8W, KYV 769X, EYE 338V, BYX 291V) were never operated either.

Renault-Dodges 369/85 (H369/85 UWB) have been withdrawn from reserve, as has Dennis Dominator 2246 (SDT 246Y) while withdrawn 2182 (NKU 182X) has donated its roof for the repair of Oxford Bus Company Leyland Olympian 229 (E229 CFC).

Renaults 101-6, 308/16/31/66/82 and Dominators 2440/50 have been sold. After travelling to Gardner at Manchester to donate its engine to 2453, the remains of 2450 (MUT 257W) were sold for scrap and 102/4, 382 and Dominator 2226 have been noted at PVS, Carlton (dealer) for scrap. The last ex-London Renault to go was 105, sold to a private buyer.

Long-serving Leyland Titan PD3 towing bus 9010 (3913 WE) has been sold, but PD3A 9001 (DUG 167C) continues, reallocated to Halfway from Olive Grove.

## First Manchester FG

First PMT Optare Solo M850/B27F 72/3/7 (V472 GBF, W473/7 SVT) are on loan for services 664/674 at Wigan (reassigned from Springfield Coachways). Dennis Dart SLF/Caetano Compass B43F REL 905 has been on loan at Oldham. Acquisitions are Dennis Dart/Plaxton Pointer MPD B28F 6201-3 (S764-6 RNE) from Springfield via Houston Ramm, Sudden (dealer).

Now withdrawn are Mercedes-Benz 811D 1717 (F507 FAM), Renault S75s 1928/9 (HDZ 5483/15), Leyland Atlanteans 4542/81 (ANA 542/81Y). Withdrawn Atlantean 4591 was destroyed in a depot fire at Wigan, which also claimed former Timeline Leyland Tiger 414 (G72 RND) and ex-First CentreWest S75 1901 (HDZ 5405).

Keighley & District 385 (B92 SWX) was the first of the company's older Leyland Olympian/ECW double-deckers to be repainted in yellow school bus livery.  
JAMES LAWRENCE





Metrobuses 5104/68 (SND 104X, ANA 168Y) have gone to First Calderline but 5060/70, 5102/3/66/7 (MRJ 60, 70W, SND 102/3X, ANA 166/7Y) have been cannibalised at Oldham.

Further to last month, Volvo B10BLE 690 is registered X683 ADK and not as shown.

Leyland Tiger/Alexander 410 (G68 RND, carrying fleetnumber 4100), Mercedes-Benz 811D/Plaxton 1732 (J34 KLR) and Leyland Olympian/Northern Counties 3237 (C237 EVU) were in use at **First Pennine** in September, MCW Metrobuses 5015/85, 5115 and 5302 (GBU 15V, ORJ 85W, SND 115X, D302 JVR) in October similarly.

**First Midland Red FG**

As illustrated last month, new 8.8m Dennis Dart/Plaxton Pointer MPD B29F 372 (X372 CUY) wears a special livery for the service between Kidderminster and Worcester, Ronkswood Hospital. It is only the second low-floor bus in the fleet — the only FirstGroup subsidiary still with no 'Barbie' buses.

Mercedes-Benz 609D/Frank Guy B20F transferred from First Eastern Counties include 1619/20/59/66/8/9 (N618/20 GAH, L259 PAH, M366/8/9 XEX).

Dennis Darts 303/5/7/10 have been resealed to DP35F, ex-DP36F.

**First PMT FG**

Ex-First Capital Dennis Dominators 690/2-4/9 are in yellow livery, 691 in the later red/yellow scheme.

Bristol VR 628 (AHU 514V) is H43/26D, ex-H43/27D, and another VR repainted is 729, for a newly-won school contract. Accident-damaged Dennis Dart 905 has been parked up out of use at Rock Ferry.

It is with some regret that I have to report that rare Foden-NC 900 (WVT 900S) has passed to PVS of Carlton (dealer) for scrap. Having been carefully stored for 16 years after it fell out of out of use here, it was offered for possible preservation but no buyer came forward. I understand it was mechanically incomplete.

**First Southern National FG**

Former First Badgerline/Wessex Dennis Darts 210/26/7 (L210 VHU, N226/7 FAE) are at Weymouth, ex-First CityLine Mercedes-Benz 709Ds 7885-7 (N885-7 HWS) are at Dorchester and ex-Badgerline Leyland Olympians 1815-7 (G902-4 TWS) are at Taunton.

**First Thamesway FG**

Mechanical failure has ended the career of rebodied Bristol VR 3226 (DWU 298T), which has gone to Eastern National's Clacton 'graveyard'.

Further withdrawn Mercedes-Benz 709Ds to migrate to First Eastern Counties are 342/54/82 (H352/65 LJN, H393 OHK).

**First Western National FG**

More Dennis Dart SLF/Alexander ALX200 B37F are 4477/8 (X477/8 SCY).

Mercedes-Benz L608D/Reeve Burgess B20F 6153 (C106 HGL) has been broken up at St Austell.

**First York FG**

Another Leyland Olympian ONLXB/1R/Roe H47/29F from First Bradford is 5029 (CUB 29Y), joining 5041/2/7 here, all bar 5041 being repainted in two-tone green before use.

All 51 Dennis Darts in the fleet are based at James Street following the inward transfer of the Easylink examples; the Dart is now the mainstay of York's bus operations, not too long ago the preserve of double-deckers.

Leyland Atlanteans 6324/5 have been withdrawn and the latter has donated its engine and is stored at Ebor Trucks of Acaster Malbis. 6324, 6463, 9389 and First Leeds 6457 (UPK 146S) are stored at Elvington.

**Fishwick, Leyland**

Great excitement has been caused by the purchase of Alexander-bodied Leyland Atlanteans UHG 144/5/7-50V from neighbouring Preston Bus. They may oust 'interloping' Bristol VRs from this one-time all-Leyland fleet.

**Frimley, Aldershot**

Former Greater Manchester Leyland Titans GNF 8/9V have been acquired from Stagecoach Swindon & District.

**GHA Coaches, Corwen**

The new Optare Solo now re-registered X9 GHA is used on service 40 (Wrexham-Mold). Leyland National 2 A132 FDC has been sold to Pilkington, Accrington.

**Geldard, Leeds.**

Three MCW Metrobuses have been added to the fleet. They are ex-London General OJD 834/73Y and ex-Go North East A618 BCN.

**Go-Bus, Chesterfield**

The first double-decker acquired is former London General MCW Metrobus DR101/14/MCW H43/30F KYV 725X for use on a Bolsover-Tupton Hall School contract, converted from H43/28D. Also in stock are Mercedes-Benz Vario/Plaxton Beaver 2s R939 AMB and R95 HLG, together with ex-Universal, Chadderton (new to Travel West Midlands) Dennis Dart 9SDL/Wright Handybus B32F KDZ 5802/5 from Stagecoach Manchester.

Leyland Nationals AAK 111T and XEU 858T have both passed to a preservationist.

**Go North East GA**

Further new vehicles are Volvo B10BLE/Wright Renown B44F 4920-4 (X492, 921-4 WGR) at Sunderland Road for Gateshead local services 57/59 and 93/94.

Another former London Central DAF DB250/Optare Spectra into service is 3855 (K323 KYG) with Go-Wear Buses at Washington. Dennis Trident 3867 (W177 SCU) has returned from repairs at East Lancs and is back in service. Surprisingly, withdrawn Leyland Lynx 4817 (F259 GWJ) has been reinstated, at Go Wear Buses' Deptford depot.

Sadly, recent withdrawals have meant that the red and cream OK Travel livery is now extinct as is the green and grey Wear Buses scheme. Withdrawn are Leyland Olympians 3613/5/6 (SJR 613Y etc), MCW Metrobus MkIIIs 3503/618/31/750/2/64/83/4 (UTN 503Y, A618/31 BCN, C750/2/64/83/4 OCN) and Dennis Darts 8027/9/33-5/41/3/5/9/74/9 (J627/9/33-5 KCU, J941/3/5/9 MFT, K374/9 BTY).

Sales are of Leyland Olympian 3575 (JTY 375X) to Heyfordian, Upper Heyford; Metrobus MkII 3637 (A637 BCN) to Halifax Joint Committee and 3752 (C752 OCN) to Walsh, Middleton; former OK Travel Leyland Atlantean 3793 (AVK 152V) to Howells, Deri, Bargoed; Leyland Lynxes 4722/3/6 (F722 LRG etc) to Chester, Walkden, 4724 (F724 LRG) to Hulley, Baslow and 4728/31 (F728/31 LRG) to Ashalls, Clayton; Dart 8021 (J621 KCU) to Pete's Travel, West Bromwich, 8027/35/8/41/74/9 (J627/35/8 KCU, J941 MFT, K374/9 RTY) to South Lancs (Green Triangle), Lostock. Metrobuses 3639/788 (A639 BCN, C788 OCN) have been sold for scrap after cannibalisation as has Leyland Atlantean 3544 (MBR 444T).

**Grayscroft, Mablethorpe**

Ex-Busways Leyland Atlantean AVK 183V is the vehicle re-registered to XBZ 1674 and ex-Nottingham MVO 414W is now RJ1 1654.

**Halifax Joint Committee, Halifax**

More MCW Metrobuses bought from Ensign, Purfleet (dealer) are ex-London General GYE 408W, KYV 760/3X, OJD 816Y, ex-Arriva London KYV 644V, B217 WUL and ex-Go North East A637 BCN. One-time Hebble AEC Regent V 2D2RA/Weymann LjX 198 has also been acquired and may return to psv use.

**Harrogate & District BL**

Volvo B10B/Alexander Striders 361-5 (M388/9/91-3 VWX) have been sold to CMT, Aintree. Leyland Tiger G435 MWU did take up fleetnumber 235 as mooted last month, thus following suit with existing Tigers 232-4.

**Hedingham Omnibuses**

A little confusion seems to have arisen over the numbering of the ex-Oxford Leyland Olympians. The latest acquisitions are ONLXB/1R/ECW H45/32F L314/5 (FWL 779/80Y), while VJO 202/6X are L310/3. L311 is the Plaxton Paragon-bodied Volvo B10M coach and L312 the new Dennis Dart/Plaxton.

Bedford YMQs L139/41/6 (FCY 287/9/5W) have been withdrawn and were the last of these automatics which served here for 12 years. Bedford YRT L215 (MKK 458P) has been dismantled for spares and its body hulk sold as scrap.

**Hills, Wolverhampton**

A new delivery is Volvo B7R/Plaxton Prima X458 KUT.

**Hornsby, Ashby, Lincs**

New here is Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer 2 MPD X94 HTL, used on Hospital Shuttle service 309. Stored Leyland Atlanteans B3 (SUA 141R) and B5 (XFW 983S) are under cannibalisation.

Howletts, Winslow, Bucks.  
An addition to stock is ex-Stagecoach East Kent MkII MCW Metrobus H46/31F F774 EKM.

**Hulley, Baslow**

An acquisition is former Arriva Southern Counties Leyland Lynx/B47F 17 (G43 VME) from Ensign, Purfleet (dealer), so Mercedes-Benz 17 (G905 UPP) has been renumbered 7. Another Lynx, ex-Go-Ahead B47F 20 (F724 LRG), has replaced the last double-decker, Leyland Fleetline SCH 117X.

**Huxley, Threapwood, Cheshire**

Former Arriva London Mercedes-Benz 811D/Reeve Burgess B28F J604 WHJ is at work still in London red.

**Imperial, Rainham, Essex**

This operator appears to be hedging its bets; recent additions are ex-London General Metrobus OJD 837Y and ex-Stagecoach London Leyland Titan KYV 379X.

**Ipswich Buses**

Mercedes-engined Optare Excel 2 demonstrator W438 CWX has been tried on services 4, 5, 7, 11 and 15. Accident-damaged Dennis Falcon 115 (E115 KDX) has been written off.

**JP Travel, Middleton**

UVG-bodied Dennis Dart SLF P17 FUG and Freight Rover Sherpa TJI 6875 have been sold.

**Johnson Bros, Hodthorpe, Notts**

Even more Bristol VRT/SL3s are LAK 935W from Wright, Newark and HWJ 925W, LVL 807V from Road Car. HWJ is DPH39/31F. Volvo B10M/Plaxton E795 WNW has come from Perry, Malton, North Yorks. VR TDT 864S has been repainted in **Redfern Coaches** green livery.

**John's School of Motoring, Hackney**

This London driving school has a growing fleet of MCW Metrobuses. It has ex-Reading MkIIs A145 AMO, B148 EDP, to which it has added ex-Go North East UTN 503Y and ex-London General M838 (OJD 638Y).

**K-Line (Teamdeck), Honley, nr Huddersfield**

New is Optare Solo B31F X791 NWX.  
Leyland National 2 DOC 41V has been sold to Glasgow Citybus.

**Keighley & District BL**

Leyland Olympians 349/85 are the first of 11 older examples to appear in yellow school bus livery with black skirt and window surrounds. Each will have its own duty to the same school daily with the same senior driver in charge — indeed seating plans for the pupils are being considered on these to encourage responsible behaviour.

Mercedes-Benz 711Ds 102-4/6/7 (L653-5/7/8 MYG) are with Gibson, Renfrew.

**Kingstons of Essex, Benfleet.**

B149 EDP is an ex-Ensign MCW Metrobus.

**Kirkby-Lonsdale, Hutton Roof**

Former Arriva Cymru Mercedes-Benz 609D/Reeve Burgess B20F H407 BVR is in stock.

**KMP, Llanberis**

Allover white Alexander-bodied Dennis Dart W937 JNF is at work while Plaxton-bodied Dennis Dart M777 KMP is in full livery.

**Leck's Travel, Backbarrow, Cumbria**

New are Mercedes-Benz 614D/Autobus C24F X773/4 XFE.

**Leon, Finningley**

Leyland Olympian ONLXB/1R/ECW H45/32F 160 (WDC 217Y) has arrived from Arriva Fox County.

**Leroy, Barway, Cambridgeshire**

An ex-London Central Leyland Titan is T796 (OHV 796Y).

**Liverpool Motor Services, Aintree**

Intriguingly, ex-Arriva Kent & Sussex MCW Metrobus A207 OKJ has been used on new services 285/286 (Liverpool-Southport) in Arriva colours — in competition with Arriva.

Group codes	
AA	— Arriva Passenger Services
BL	— Blazefield Holdings
DG	— DelGro
EY	— EYMS Group
FG	— FirstGroup
GA	— Go-Ahead Group
NX	— National Express Group
SG	— Status Bus & Coach Group
ST	— Stagecoach Holdings
YT	— Traction Group



# FLEET FACT

## THE LONDON DMS

The buses referred to generically as London Transport's DMS class – see under the Shorey heading – also included vehicles classed as D, DM and DS. They were the 2,646 Daimler and Leyland Fleettines delivered between 1970 and 1978, the first purpose-designed one-person-operated, rear-engined double-deckers for the national capital. They had bodies by Park Royal and Metro-Cammell Weymann and engines by Gardner, Leyland and Rolls-Royce. They began arriving about 30 months after the last Routemasters were supplied. By then, LT had purchased large numbers of AEC Swift/Merlin single-deckers and found them lacking in many ways. The DMS was supposed to overcome some of those problems, but LT and the DMS were an unhappy match. Plans for their disposal were in hand when the last of the class entered service and volume withdrawals began soon after, with several major British and Hong Kong operators buying them. A change of heart kept the last examples (many repowered with Iveco engines) in service until 1991/92.

**Optare Solo M920 X539 NWT, the first new bus in over 16 years for Flintshire independent Lloyds of Bagillt.**

## ENGLAND & WALES

Stagecoach Fife has provided Dennis Dominator/Alexander H46/32F NKU 191X (acquired from Allison, Dunfermline) and former Selkent Leyland Olympian ONLXB/1R/ECW H42/26D C111 CHM has come from Newline, Bootle. In Dublin Bus style, Olympian D706 YHK (VLT 20, D260 FYM) has been repainted allover cream for regular use at weddings.

### Lloyds, Bagillt

The first new vehicle for more than 16 years is X539 NWT, a B30F Optare Solo for a circular service linking Flint and Holywell. It replaces one of two Optare MetroRiders (RIL 1067/72) acquired from London Central last year.

Used acquisitions are ex-Preston East Lancs H50/36F-bodied Leyland Atlantean AN68D/2Rs URN 169/71Y and ex-Warrington East Lancs H51/37F-bodied Dennis Dominators CLV 41X, A747/8 GFY.

Lloyds celebrates its 75th anniversary in 2001.

### London Buses

A 31st Routemaster acquired for refurbishment is RM1245 (LDS 210A, 245 CL7). Since London service it had worked for Stagecoach Bluebird and was latterly in preservation in Glasgow.

### London Central/ London General GA

More London General Volvo B7TLs are PVL144-55 (X544, 745, 546-9/99/51-4, 615 EGK). They have Plaxton President H41/23D bodywork. PVL156-71/4 were expected to follow rapidly.

London Central Leyland Titans T892, 932, 1104 (A892, 932 SYE, B104 WUV) have been sold, T892 to South Gloucestershire (Durbins). Also sold are the remains of RM71.

London General MCW Metrobuses M867, 908, 1005 (OJD 867Y, A908 SUL, A705 THV) have been withdrawn. M302/61/75, (BYV 302V, GYE 361/75W), 802 (KYV 802X), 816/33/42/8 (OJD 816Y etc), 853 (SGC 671Y), 868/71 (OJD 868/71Y) and 946 (A946 SUL) have been sold to Ensign, Purfleet (dealer) and others disposed of are M331 (EYE 331V), 760/3/94 (KYV 760X etc), 807/22/37/68 (OJD 807Y etc). Plaxton-bodied Dennis Darts DRL1, 3-6, 10 (J601 XHL etc) have also been sold.

### London Pride

MCW Metrobuses WYW 64, 75T, BYX 129V have been reinstated and are in service as 106/7/9. It is presumed that ex-Thamesdown Dennis Dominators 106/7 (SMW 57/8Y) are therefore withdrawn.

### London United

Elderly Metrobuses M13, 22, 31 (WYW 13, 22, 31T) have been sold to Thames Valley Training.

### Ludlow, Halesowen

New here is DAF SB120CS/Wright Cadet B39F X808 NWX.

### Marchant, Cheltenham

A second Leyland Olympian in stock here is ONLXB/1R/ECW H45/32F TSO 17X, ex-Stagecoach Bluebird

### Marchwood, Southampton

Two low-floor Optare Spectras have been placed in service in Solent Blue Line livery. They are understood to have 75 high-backed seats with seatbelts and one of the two is W231 CDN.

### Martin, Chapeltown

Former Stagecoach Leyland Titan TNLXB/1RF/Park Royal H47/26F GNF 6V is in use on schools work here after the failure of Duple-bodied Bedford WRA 835S.

### MASS, North Anston

Leyland Titan CUL 74V has had a more thorough single-door conversion to H44/28F, with two pairs of forward-facing seats installed in the door area. It is confirmed as numbered 0074. Other Titans have a less satisfactory inward-facing seat for three at the base of the stairs and between the exit-door bulkheads. A925 SYE is confirmed as entering service in London red and further examples are KYV 527X and CUL 193V. KYV 318/20, 527X and NUW 608/37Y are in white, red and green livery as is Dennis Dominator NKU 217X.

### Metroline DG

The anticipated 10.5m long Dennis Tridents with Alexander ALX400 H45/24D bodywork have started to enter service. TAL118-30 (X341/19/36/7/22/43/24/35/26/7/38/29/42 HLL) — registrations are even more muddled than usual — were delivered by the end of October, with TAL131-4 expected soon after. MCW Metrobuses withdrawn are M137, 482, 550, 618/21/83/96, 1183 (BYX 137V, GYE 482, 550W, KYO 618/21X, KYV 683/96X, B183 WUL) and M25, 42, 79, 163/7, 574 (WYW 25, 42, 79T, BYX 163/7V, GYE 574W) have been sold for scrap. Ex-R&I Iveco Daily midibuses IR202, IL208 (RIB 5082, 7004) have been sold to Ensign, Purfleet (dealer). **Brents Coaches** Dennis Javelins N20 JET, N464 BHE have been returned to their lessor.

### MR Travel, Rochdale

Dennis Dart SLF T73/5 JBA have been acquired from Mistral Bus & Coach (dealer), 73 last with Ryder, Coventry and 75 with Raj of Birmingham. UVG-bodied SLF R809 WJA has come from Universal, Chadderton.

Northern Counties-bodied Leyland Atlantean ANA 538Y and Roe-bodied Atlantean KPJ 286W have been acquired from Fingland, Rusholme.

### Newport Transport

Withdrawn Optare MetroRider 57 (G57 KTX) was used for a two-week trip as part of an aid convoy to Belarus during September.

### NIBS, Wickford, Essex

Attractive acquisitions are ex-Cardiff Scania N113DRB/Alexander H47/33F G601/3-5/7 KTX to oust Bristol VRs.

### North Birmingham Busways, Erdington

Leyland Atlantean 33 (STK 133T) has been sold to Highway, Templecombe.

### Nottingham City Transport

A further report has been received and, in an attempt to clarify and confirm, recent new Dennis Trident/East Lancs Lolyne H53/34F delivered are 650-62 (W941 SNR, W651-4 SNN, W942 SNR, W656-9 SNN, W943 SNR, X661/2 WCH), with 663-5 due imminently.

East Lancs-bodied Dennis Dart 514 (P514 CVO) has been downseated from B44F to B33F for use on 'Runway 5' service to East Midlands Airport. Mercedes-Benz 165/6/8 (G165/6 RRA, J168 CTO) have been renumbered 965/6/8.

### Oare, Brynford, Flint

Bristol VRT/SL3 VEX 296X has been sold.

### Owens, Oswestry

New here is Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814/Plaxton Cheetah C25F X186 DNT, operating in allover white. Late-model Plaxton Integral 425 L345 MKU has been withdrawn and was the last vehicle to wear Williamsons of Knockin Heath livery (this operator was taken over last year).

### Oxford Bus Company GA

Volvo B10M/Plaxton 56 (N156 BFC) was involved in a serious motorway accident in November and is withdrawn pending a decision on its future. As a replacement, withdrawn ex-Shearings Volvo B10M/Plaxton Paramount 59 (UJI 1759 H959 DRJ) has been relicensed.

At the end of September, the Olympians were returned to their winter storage, but are available to cover shortages at both Oxford and Wycombe and 214/22 (BBW 214Y, CUD 222Y) have been on loan to Wilts & Dorset. They had earlier been loaned along with 221 (CUD 221Y) to the **Wycombe Bus** fleet to cover for repairs to its accident damaged Olympians 229/30 (E229 CFC, G230 VWL) and Volvo B10B 623 (N623 FJO); 229 was the Thames Valley heritage-liveried example which sustained roof damage at Cookham.

Volvo B10M/Plaxton Premiere 52 (L152 HUD), B10M/Plaxton Paramount 60 (UJI 1760, H954 DRJ) and ERF breakdown truck G1 (CUG 296T) have been sold to Irish operator O'Neachtain, Spiddal, Co Galway.

Leyland Leopard driver trainer T4 (VUD 33X) has been re-registered ABW 310X.

Mercedes-Benz 717 has returned to Wycombe Bus from its Barton Shuttle work with Oxford.





## Pete's Travel, West Bromwich,

Acquired from Go North East is Dennis Dart/Wright Handybus B40F J621 KCU.

## Phoenix North West, Blackpool

The MetroRider is being standardised upon here, with Optare B20 (H705 UNW) from Arriva Yorkshire and as yet un-numbered MCWs F112 YVP and F197 YDA from London being the most recent additions in use.

## Pied Bull, Mold

Ex-Arriva Cymru Freight Rover Sherpa/Carlisle II D143 WCC is at work

## Plymouth Citybus

The Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer SPD B43F have arrived. They are 41/2 (X141/2 CDV) with SuperRider branding. MPDs 201-4 (X201-4 CDV) all have Super Park n Rider branding.

Ex-Trent Volvo Citybus B10M-50/Alexander H47/37F 190 (F607 AVO) and Mercedes-Benz 709D 285 (N285 PDV) are in orange livery for Plymouth College of Further Education. Thanks to Graham Richardson for this topical update.

## Powells Bus, Hellaby

Leyland Tiger 3's new registration is FIL 8368 (91 RTO, A579 RVU).

## Preston Bus

The first two of the next batch of East Lancs Lolyne-bodied Dennis Tridents, 183/4 (X183/4 RRN) entered traffic on 31 October on service 11 (Bus Station-Ribbleson) although the batch is earmarked for services 22/23. 186 (X186 RRN) was noted shortly afterwards, and 185/7 were due imminently with 188/9/97-9 after a pause. These introduce side destination indicators and rear numeral repeaters electronically controlled from the cab. Allover white Volvo B7TL/East Lancs Vykking demonstrator X645 RDA ran alongside the new Tridents on service 11 for a two-week trial.

Withdrawals are of East Lancs-bodied Leyland Atlanteans 169/71 (URN 169/71Y), sold to Lloyd, Bagillt and repainted before departure; 152/65 (GFV 152W, DBV 165X) are earmarked for early withdrawal. Alexander-bodied Atlanteans 144/5/7-50 (UHG 144V etc) have been sold to neighbouring Fishwick, Leyland. Alexander-bodied 142/3 (UHG 142/3V) are expected to continue in service here for a while longer and 141 (UHG 141V) has been set aside for a Lothian preservationist (it having been demonstrated in Edinburgh when new).

## Reading Buses

New here are Optare Excel 2 L1180/B39F 961-4 (X961-4 BPA); the 30mm extra length over previous Excels will reportedly accommodate two more standing passengers. They have pseudo-Solo restyled rears as well, including windows unlike predecessors. 962 was delivered as W962 RPB, but was changed. Delivered in allover cream, they have had two green bands added for their special Thames Valley Park livery. Park Royal-bodied Leyland Titans 68/9 (YJB 68/9T) were due to have been ousted from the TVP Shuttle by the new Excels.

Two new vehicles are expected to be added to the increasingly busy Vodafone contract in Newbury.

Leyland Olympian 85 (F85 MJH) is another to lose its coach seats in favour of standard bus ones to H43/27F pattern.

Conductor operation was expected to finish on service 21 around November, though conductors have also been used on service 17, with special windscreens labels to promote this.

Optare MetroRider 609 (J609 SJB) is delicensed as are Newbury's gas-powered 614/24 (M614 NRD, N624 ATF), all stored at Reading but not yet officially withdrawn.

MAN 11.190/Optare Vecta B40F 812/3 (N812/3 XJH) have been transferred to **Newbury Buses**. The last two Vectas remaining at Reading, 811/4 (M811 PDP, M957 VWY), are expected to follow. After three months out of use for repairs after accident damage, 801 (K801 DCF) is back in traffic.

Ex-Beeline Mercedes-Benz 811D/Optare StarRiders 202/4/8-10 (F532/4 NRD, F362-4 SDP) are due for early withdrawal.

## Reay, Wigton, Cumbria

Volvo B10M-62/Van Hool C53F W458 DYG and Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814/Autobus C33F X274 SRM are new here.

## Renown, Bexhill

More Leyland Titans are TNLXB2RR/Leyland A608 THV, A993 SYE from London Central, A982 SYE from Baldock, Five Oak Green and Park Royal-bodied EYE 240V from Stagecoach South Coast Buses. Dennis Dart/Reeve Burgess B28F H115 THE has also arrived, from Metroline.

## Road Car YT

Further to last month there are five East Lancs Spryte B39F-bodied Dennis Dart SLFs. The complete batch is 522-6 (X522-4, 585, 526 HFE) which are in Super Buzz yellow and blue livery for Scunthorpe town services.

## Rossendale Transport

Four new Dennis Darts are due.

Leyland Atlantean 130 (A752 NNA) has gone to Wigley, Carlton (dealer). MCW Metrorider 51 (NSU 181, D87 EDH) has been scrapped and Talbot Freeway 199 (E764 KJX) is in ancillary stock. East Lancs-bodied Leyland Leopard 71 (PJI 9171) is a dedicated driver trainer.

## St George Travel, Washington

Latest acquisition is Mercedes-Benz 811D/LHE B33F G175 DRF from Arriva North East and 709D/Reeve Burgess B20F E455 AFT from Stagecoach Busways.

## Shorey, Maulden, Beds

Relatively unusually these days, five former London DMS-class Fleetlines are still at work. They are Daimler GHV 51N and GHV 999N and Leyland OJD 351R, THX 304, 580S. THX 283S is also owned but is withdrawn and awaits sale. Three MCW Metrobuses acquired are TIL 4036/7 (GYE 589, 406W) and unidentified TIL 4038, while similar BYX 214V has been acquired for cannibalisation.

## Silcox, Pembroke Dock

Acquisitions are of ex-Cardiff Optare MetroRider/B31F H172/3 RBO.

## Silver Star, Caernarfon

Three ex-Crosville Bristol LH6Ls, LMA 609P and MCA 613/5P, remain in regular service and have recently been joined by LJT 916P. Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814/Robin Hood C25F W733 WBK is also owned.

## Skills, Nottingham

Setras 24/8 and 44 (T80 SMC, W728 TNR, W244 RRB) have been re-registered SIL 7024/8, 9544 respectively.

## Solent Blue Line

Demonstrators in use here have included the East Lancs Spryte-bodied MAN NL222 and a Mini Pointer Dart, the latter being considered as a replacement for the 25 29-seat Iveco midibuses in service. While no decision has been taken, it was felt that conventional midibuses are more suitable for some of the company's operations, and Iveco demonstrator R829 GKX, a Marshall B27F-bodied Daily, has been added to the fleet as 229. More new low-floor double-deckers are expected next year, probably eight. Loadings have increased by 13% in a year on service 47 (Southampton-Winchester) since the Dennis Tridents entered service.

## South Lancs (Green Triangle),

### Lostock

Dennis Dart 9.8SDL/Wright B40F J627/35/8 KCU, J941 MFT, K374/9 RTY have come from Go North East.

Plaxton Derwent-bodied Leyland Tiger G492 AWS has passed to County Carriages, Stockport, East Lancs-bodied Leyland Leopard B27 ADW to PVS, Carlton (dealer) for scrap.

## Stagecoach Busways ST

Mercedes-Benz 709D/Alexander B23F transferred from Stagecoach Western are 1520-7 (G254/77/82-4/6/92 TSL, G976 ARV), while Reeve Burgess-bodied 709Ds 1450/3/7 (E450/3/7 AFT) have been withdrawn.

Leyland Olympian 658 (C658 LFT) is with Stagecoach East Midland, while 652/8/61 (C652 LFT etc) are with Stagecoach Transit.

## Stagecoach Cambus ST

Further Stagecoach East London/Selkent Volvo Olympian/Northern Counties Palatine H49/31F are 604-6/19/20/3 (P804 GMU etc), which are being put to work in London red before receiving the new Stagecoach livery, although previously-acquired 618 (P818 GMU) has appeared in fleet livery. Not all the earlier Olympians being replaced are going to Viscount; 515-7 (F515-7 NJE) have gone to Stagecoach Midland Red, though Viscount has Leyland Olympians 512/3 (F512/3 NJE) and Volvo Olympians 535/72 (P535/72 EFL). Olympian 587 (S587 BCE) has Stagecoach Express branding.

## Stagecoach Cheltenham & Gloucester Group ST

New for **Cheltenham District** are Dennis Dart/Plaxton Pointer SPD B41F 502/3/6/7/10-3 (X502/3/6/7/18/11-3 ADF). They were delivered as W502/3/6/7, 709, 511-3 VDD. Volvo B10M-55s 417-20 (N817/8 DNE, P819/20 GNC) and Leyland Titan 1838 (A838 SUL) have been transferred to Cheltenham & Gloucester while Dodge G13 driver trainer DT9 (YJV 806 D817 OAK, 92 KF 97) has passed to Swindon & District.

**Cheltenham & Gloucester** Mercedes-Benz 709Ds 686-8/90 (L686 CDD etc) have been withdrawn; 686/7/90 have gone to Stagecoach South East and while 811D 1802 (K802 OMW) has gone to Stagecoach East Midland. **Swindon & District** Leyland Titans 106/8-10 (GNF 6V etc) and **Circle Line** Leyland National 307 (SEA 752S) have been sold to Hardwick, Barnsley (dealer). 108/9 (GNF 8/9V) have materialised with Frimley, Aldershot. Swindon & District Leyland Olympian ONLXB/2RZ/Alexander H51/36F 105 (G105 AAD) has passed to Cheltenham & Gloucester

## Stagecoach Cumberland ST

Receipts from Stagecoach Western are Volvo B6-50/Alexander DP40F 284/5 (M733/4 BSJ), while — as reported in Fleet News Scotland this month — the transfer of Annan area services (principally the Annan-Dumfries section of service 79 from Carlisle) on 6 November resulted in the arrival here of Western Mercedes-Benz 709D/Alexander B25F M662/3 FYS along with six Alexander Y-type Leyland Leopards, PSU3D/4R TSJ 70S and PSU3E/4Rs GCS 33/7, 41/9V and GSO 82V; the Leopards have B53F seating, except for DP49F-seated GCS 37V and GSO 82V. Also transferred permanently from that date were Western Leyland Titans 944/6/58 (GYE 254/81W, OHV 809Y) which had been on loan at Lancaster since 13 September.

To cover for repairs to ex-MoD Dodge G13 driver trainer 3001 (LJC 800) which suffered an engine fire, Stagecoach Ribble Leyland Leopard PSU5D/5R/Wadham Stringer T251 (RBZ 4243, 50 AC 00) and PSU3E/3R/Alexander (Belast) T254 (EGB 53T) have been on loan at Kendal.

### Group codes

AA	— Arriva
	Passenger Services
BL	— Blazefield Holdings
DG	— DelGro
EY	— EYMS Group
FG	— FirstGroup
GA	— Go-Ahead Group
NX	— National Express Group
SG	— Status Bus & Coach Group
ST	— Stagecoach Holdings
YT	— Traction Group

**Nottingham City Transport's recent deliveries of East Lancs Lolyne-bodied Dennis Tridents includes 662 (X662 WCH) photographed at a London open day in September.**  
GEOFF RIXON





Bristol VRT/SL3 2024 (DBV 24W) has been returned to service at Heysham. Wayfarer 2 ticket-issue equipment is being fitted to former Heysham Travel vehicles, replacing out-dated Setright units.

Heysham Travel Leyland National 2s 909/11 (WWM 909/11W) have been withdrawn, while 872 (LFR 872X) has passed to the Ribble Vehicle Preservation Group; it's one of few National 2s in preservation. Mercedes-Benz L608Ds 528/9/33/59 (D528 RCK etc) have been sold.

### Stagecoach East Midlands ST

Leyland Fleetline 263 (OCU 822R) has been sold for scrap. The Leyland Olympians from Manchester are only on loan, and another Olympian to arrive is Busways' ONLXB/1R/Alexander RH H45/31F C658 LFT.

### Stagecoach London ST

More 9.9m Dennis Trident/Alexander ALX400 H43/21D are TAS247-60 (X247-9, 372, 251-4, 373, 256-9, 374 NNO). TAS 268 (X268 NNO) is the first in Stagecoach's new London livery.

Further Volvo Olympian/Northern Counties sent to Cambus are VN4-6, 19, 20/3 (P804 GMU etc) while Plaxton Verde-bodied Dennis Lances LV4, 7, 9 (L204 YAG etc) have migrated to Stagecoach South. Titans T437/9, 532 (KYV 437/9, 532X), T610 (NUW 610Y) and T804 (OHV 804Y) have been sold, all except T439 to Ensign, Purfleet (dealer).

Ensign has sold eight of the Selkent L-class Leyland Olympians in its dealer stock to another Stagecoach company — Coach USA. The remaining 32 which Ensign still has in stock are expected to follow them.

### Stagecoach Manchester ST

New MAN 18.220 HOCLs with the usual Alexander ALX300 B42F bodywork are 216-9/21/3/4/6/35/6 (X216 BNE etc), featuring detail differences to previous batches in having anti-assault screens, individual seating and other detail differences.

Dennis Trident 634 was despatched to Falkirk on 17 October for repainting into the new style Stagecoach livery. Leyland Olympians 3213/4/55/60 are only on loan to East Midlands.

### Stagecoach Midlands Red ST

Former Stagecoach Viscount Volvo B6LE/Alexander ALX200 856/7 (P320/1 EFL) are at work in Banbury as are ex-Cheltenham & Gloucester 852/3 (P852/3 SMR) after a brief spell at Rugby. Former Stagecoach Cambus Leyland Olympian ONLXV/1RZ/Northern Counties H45/30F F515-7 NJE are also in stock, while ex-Red & White Mercedes-Benz Varios R624 CTX, T586/8 SKG have been numbered 524/86/8, repainted in Stagecoach livery (ex-Phil Anslow green) and allocated to Leamington.

Volvo B10M-62/Berkhof Excellence 1000LD C51Ft 8, 13 (4828, 3063 VC) have been withdrawn, 13 moving on to Stagecoach United Counties.

### Stagecoach Red & White ST

Repainting of ex-Anslow Mercedes-Benz minibuses (not Ivecos however) into all-over white was nearing completion at the end of October.

Leyland Tiger coach 914 (AAX 516A, SDW 930Y) has been withdrawn, this being notable as the last survivor of the 177 vehicles acquired from National Welsh on formation of the 'new' Red & White in February 1991. Mercedes-Benz 179 and 254 (F609 XMS, G689 KNW) have passed to Wealden, Tonbridge (dealer) via Fleetlink of Liverpool (dealer). The remains of burnt out Volvo B6 721 (L81 CWO) have been despatched to a Barnsley dealer for scrap.

Abergavenny outstation closed in October.

### Stagecoach Ribble ST

Leyland National 2s 333/9 (FUH 33V, BUH 239V) and Mercedes-Benz 709D 568 (G568 PRM) have been sold, as have 569/74 (G569/74 PRM) to Fleetline, Wexford and Bristol VR 2042 (RRP 858R) to Norfolk Green, Kings Lynn.

### Stagecoach South East ST

The September re-organisation has brought the above title into being, incorporating the former Stagecoach East Kent and Stagecoach South Group fleets.

New are Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer SPD B41F 53/4/6-9, 61-69, 71 (X953 VAP etc), all for Sussex Coastline and the revamped service 23, with 72 (X972 VAP) due, while for the Canterbury park-&-ride are MAN 18.220/Alexander ALX300 B42F 1004-8 (X604-7 VDY, X948 XAP) and Dennis Trident/Alexander ALX400 H47/27F 7001/2 (X601/2 VDY), all in the special metallic grey and purple livery — their standard Stagecoach moquette was changed on-site after delivery. They have Hanover indicator equipment with side and rear repeaters and also have exhaust particulate traps.

Refurbished former Hong Kong Citybus Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer DP37F 39, 40 (P479/44 AYJ, HC 4904, HB 5506) are with Hampshire Bus at Basingstoke and were DP39D when new. More imports from Hong Kong are Volvo B6LE/Alexander ALX200 B34F 45, 51 (R95, 71 NPN, HM 2185, 6567) with Sussex Coastline at Portsmouth, and HM 653, as-yet unnumbered, has followed — these were new as B36F.

From less exotic sources are Mercedes-Benz 709D/Alexander (Belfast) B25F 817/8/20 (L687/8/90 CDD), now with Hants & Surrey (B17) and Sussex Coastline (B18/20); from Stagecoach Selkent are Dennis Lance/Plaxton Verde B42D 1204/7/9 (L204 YAG), unallocated as are ex-Stagecoach East London Scania N113DRB/Northern Counties H41/25D 7722/7/45/69 (K852/47 LMK, J145 HMT, K869 LMK), 7727/69 with East Kent and 7745 with South Coast Buses. These are being converted to H41/27F — 7711/20/57/45/56/8 (K871/50/5/47 LMK, J145 HMT, K856/8 LMK) have been completed recently — while Lances 1202/3/12 (L202/3 YAG, L942 RJN) are also being converted to B42F and 1204/6 (L204/6 YAG) to B46F.

Stagecoach Devon Mercedes-Benz 711D/Marshall C19 DP28F 510 (N205 CUD) is understood to be on trial with Hampshire Bus.

South Coast Buses 29-31 (P299, 330/01 AYJ) have received Hailsham Flyer branding and are named Zip, Betty and Lovelygully respectively.

Andover-based Dennis Dart 581 (J701 YRM) recently returned to service after three months' inactivity, but is out of use again with chassis defects. The remains of the chassis of Dart 525 (J525 GCD) have been broken up on-site after removal of useable components.

Leyland National 1344 (PJJ 344S), Leyland Titans 7203/71/94 (A823 SUL, NUW 671, 594Y), Bristol VR 7672 (BJK 672V) and MCW Metrobus MkII 7762 (F762 EKM) have been withdrawn. Recently-withdrawn 7670 was the last VR at Hastings.

Sales are of National 2s 129/44/51 (HUF 603X, ERV 116W, PEX 621W), National 1344 (PJJ 344S) and Titan 7209 (OHV 769Y) to Hardwick, Carlton (dealer), National 169 (WYJ 169S) and VR 7670 (XJJ 670V) to Lister of Bolton (dealer), Titans 7203/71/88/94 (A823 SUL, NUW 671Y, KYN 288X, NUW 594Y) to Fleetlink North West, Liverpool (dealer), VRs 7652/3/5/72 (XJJ 652/3/5V, BJJ 672V) to Chepstow Classic Buses, Scania N113DRB 7729 (J829 HMC) to Stagecoach Devon and Metrobus MkIIs 7747/9/52/67/72/4 (E747/9/52 SKR, F767/72/4 EKM) to Ensign, Purfleet, as dealer, though 7747/9/52/67 have gone into Ensign's own operational fleet.

### Stagecoach Transit ST

Ex-Stagecoach Busways Leyland Olympian ONLXB/1R/Alexander RH H45/31F C652/8/61 LFT have been transferred here.

### Stagecoach United Counties ST

Volvo B10M-62/Berkhof Excellence 1000LD C51Ft 167 (3063 VC, M43 NJO) is a transfer in from Stagecoach Midlands Red, while Mercedes-Benz 709D/Alexander B25F L696 CDD arrived from Cheltenham & Gloucester in October.

### Stott, Oldham

More double-deckers here are ex-Cardiff Scania N113DRB/Alexander H47/33F G602/6 KTX and H47/31F J608-10 VDW.

### Swanbrook, Cheltenham

Recent additions are MCW Metrobus DR101/16/MCW H43/28F A900/26 SUL from London General, supplied by Ensign, Purfleet (dealer) and converted to single-door from H43/28D. Mercedes-Benz 811D/Alexander C33D F71 LAL has come from Windle, St Helens. It was new to Skill, Nottingham and was then with Midland Red South for a while.

### Tanat Valley, Pentrefelin

More ex-Stagecoach Bluebird Leyland Olympians are ONLXB/1R/Alexander H45/32F A45/7 FRS, joining A46 FRS acquired a month earlier, and ECW H45/32F-bodied Olympian TSO 16X, which came on loan at first to replace Leyland Titan BTX 204T (WDA 57), the overall height of which meant it sustained tree damage. The remaining vehicles of T. R. Morris, Llanfyllin have been transferred into stock, comprising Bedford YMT/Plaxton Supreme IV Express C53F LNU 576W, YNT/Duple Laser 2 C51F B153 JVK (UJR 1) and similar but C53F B218 KEJ. LNU is expected to be retained as a driver trainer but the Lasers are to be sold.

Alexander-bodied Leyland Fleetline HSD 78V has been withdrawn along with newly-acquired Northern Counties-bodied Renault-Dodge S46 LIL 2830 (E406 EPE), but Plaxton-bodied Leyland Leopard RNL 413V (4012 VC, KUB 546V) is back in service, still in full Stagecoach livery.

After two years' inactivity, Fleetline HSD 84V has been towed away for scrap as has Willowbrook 003-bodied Leyland Leopard SCH 148X.

### Thamesdown Transport

Leyland Olympians 316-9 (B416 CMC, A127/03/6 EPA) have been re-registered DCZ 2316-9 respectively.

### Thames Travel, Goring-on-Thames

Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814/Plaxton Beaver 2 X182 BNH is new here.

Unused Volkswagen LT55/Optare CityPacers E557 GFR and D560 YCW, as well as derelict ex-Plymouth Dodge D142 LTA have been disposed of.

### Tillingbourne, Cranleigh

A new addition to the fleet is B39F Optare Excel L1070 307 (X307 CBT). A second one is due. Further re-registrations are Leyland Tiger 279 (F279 HOD) to TIL 1178 and Volvo B10M 102 (K102 XPA) to TIL 1185.

### TM Travel, Old Tupton

Acquisitions are Leyland Olympian ONLXB/1R/ECW H41/32F SPY 206X from Arriva North East, to be repainted in Unibus livery for service 4 (Hillstown-Buxton); Leyland Titan/Leyland H44/26D OHV 799, 806Y both from Stagecoach Selkent; Leyland Fleetline FE30AGR/Park Royal H43/33F SDA 634S from Aston, Killmarsh; Optare MetroRider/B31F L839 MWT from Stagecoach Red & White but from Parfitts Motor Services; Bedford YMP/Plaxton C41F C431 RJR (BXI 829, C89 TLF) from Harker, Newcastle.

Leyland National FDV 830V and Titan B82 WUV have been repainted in red/cream fleet livery. Recently-acquired DP Leyland National 2 KAJ 215W has been out of use after mechanical failure. Now withdrawn are Leyland National 2 EKY 22V sold to West Kent Coach Sales (dealer), and Bedford YLQ FFL 138V while MCW Metrorider E305 EVW has been written off.

Stagecoach South East is steadily putting its air conditioned ex-Citybus, Hong Kong Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton buses into service. This example, showing work done to remove its middle door, was photographed in Guildford with the Hants & Surrey fleet.

MARK BAILEY





Trent Buses

Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer MPD demonstrators V946 DNB and T79 JBA have been on loan at Langley Mill and given fleetnumbers 950/1 respectively. Mercedes-Benz Varios 298/9 (T298/9 LCH) are in purple Connect 5 livery. Dart SLFs 941-4 (S941-4 UAL) have lost Barton Airways branding and are reallocated to Trent Buses at Derby, the four replacing MAN/Optare Vectras 801-4 (M801-4 PRA) on services V1 and V3, 803 losing its Villager branding on reallocation to Langley Mill.

The Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire fleet is to receive Notts & Derby fleetnames, replacing the Blue Apple names used on all vehicles apart from those in dedicated Unibus livery.

Volvo Citybuses 608-11 (F608-11 GVO), have been sold to Finglands, leaving Sutton-in-Ashfield-based Leyland Olympians 719/20 (C719 LTO, C720 NNN) as the company's last double-deckers. The last Optare Metroriders, 1217-21/35-41 (N217-21 VRC, P235-41 CTV), have also gone while Leyland Nationals 480/1, 516/8/58/9/65/8 (WGY 587S, XAL 481S, FRA 516/8V, TTC 532T, UHW 101T, SAE 751S, DAR 120T) have also been withdrawn.

Volvo B10M 2 (L802 MRA) has been sold to PAB Travel, Dublin, 3 and 4 (L803/4 MRA) to White Star, Lockerbie; Nationals 565/8 (SAE 715S, DAR 120T) are with Konect Coaches, Thetford, Norfolk but 450/95 and 514 (PRR 450R, XAL 495S, ACH 514T) have gone for scrap to North, Sherburn-in-Elmet (dealer).

Kinchbus has acquired Leyland Atlanteans 683/4 (BTV 656T, MNU 694W) from Winson, Loughborough, replacing similar 675/8 (BAU 675T, BRC 678T), both despatched to Wigley, Barnsley (dealer) for scrap.

Universitybus, Hatfield

Due about now are X773/4 XVS, Wright Cadet B41F-bodied DAF SB120CS. Ex-Seamarks Optare Deltas F370 BUA, G278 WKX and Dennis Javelin L94 GUL have been sold.

Walton, Freckleton

This operator's schoolbus fleet comprises Leyland Atlantean/Alexander AVK 175W, Bristol VR/ECW LFJ 854/68W, VUA 471X and Leyland National 2 LFR 872X, all in yellow and white with prominent lettering.

Warrington Borough Transport

Dennis Dart SLF 17 sports a dot-matrix indicator display in place of its conventional unit. The newest Dennis Dominators have replaced Darts in use on the BT contract. Dominators 41/7/8 (CLV 41X, A747/8 GFY) have passed to Lloyd, Bagillt.

Weavaway Travel, Newbury

New deliveries are Scania N113DRB/East Lancs Cityzen DPH78F X501/2 AHE, used on private charter and contract work and in full livery, joined by similar W19 CKY in service here. Former Oxford Optare MetroRider G782 WFC has been re-registered 'B10M FC' but retains Oxford colours. Ex-Wycombe Bus Leyland Olympians FWL 779/80Y have been replaced by the new Scantias and have gone to Hedingham Omnibuses, replacing only marginally older Bristol VRs.

Western Greyhound, Newquay

Latest acquisition is Leyland Leopard PSU5C/4R/Plaxton Supreme IV C57F WHW 465T from Swallow, Redruth.

White Rose, Thorpe, Surrey

Caetano Nimbus B44F-bodied Dennis Super Dart X199 FOR is numbered DC2. A similar dual-door vehicle, X93 FOR, was used on loan for a time and may join the fleet, probably to replace Caetano Compass-bodied Dart DC1 (V765 FPO).

Older Darts joining the fleet, and smartly turned out in the 1970s LT-style red with a white roof, are ex-Metroline Carlyle B28F-bodied Dennis Darts DT88, 103 (H588 MOC, H103 MOB). DT88 has been re-registered WLT 881.

The rest of the fleet comprises MCW Metrobuses M34/9, 57, 88 (WYW 34T etc), 246 (BYX 246V), 501/24 (GYE 501/24W), 836 (OJD 836Y), Leyland Titans T756/94 (OHV 756/94Y), 968 (A968 SYE), Leyland Nationals LNB23 (VLT 23, HPK 504M) and National 2 LS445 (GUW 445W). Metrobus M524 is soon to be withdrawn, and also withdrawn is Titan T1123 (B123 WUV), while Leyland National LS146 (THX 146S) is used as a seat store.

Thanks are due to chairman David Wilkinson for news of his fleet.

Wilts & Dorset

Only weeks after the arson attack at Lyndhurst, there was a second attack at Poole which destroyed six vehicles. The fire broke out in Optare Spectra 3121 (L121 ELJ), which was destroyed. The other vehicles destroyed were Optare Solo 2650 (T650 AJT), DAF SB220/Ikarus 3508 (N12 WAL), Leyland Tiger/Duple Laser 3205 (B205 REL), Leyland Leopard/Plaxton driver trainer 9079 (ELJ 215V) and 7047 (A106 EPA), a Leyland Tiger/Plaxton Paramount coach on loan from Levers for driver training. Bristol VRT 4423 (ELJ 215V) was also damaged but was sent for repair.

Oxford Bus Leyland Olympians 214/22 (BBW 214Y, CUD 222Y) have been on hire.

Yorkshire Coastliner BL

One of the 15 new Volvo B10BLE/Wright Renowns due for Keighley & District is to be diverted to evaluate the suitability of low-floor vehicles on Coastliner services. Mercedes-Benz 811D 404 (H404 PGS) has been withdrawn and is understood to have passed to Ripley, Carlton (dealer).

CHANNEL ISLANDS

GUERNSEY

Guernseybus

It is with some regret that I can now confirm the sale of the entire vintage fleet. Fortunately they have been acquired by Mike Nash of Weybridge, a dealer sympathetic to classic vehicles. They are former RT-class AEC Regent III open-toppers 14/5/8 (54636, 2388, KXW 123; 58651, 2634, KXW 476; 2972, LUC 196), unfinished closed-top forward-entrance conversion LLU 804; closed-top/forward-entrance Leyland Titan RTL-class 19 (47132, 995, KY Y 647) and ex-Jersey rebodied Leyland Tiger PS1s open-top 16 (12523, 2493, J 5567) and closed-top 17 (28231, 9439, J 5660).

I am grateful to Mike Nash and Jim Young for this item.

JERSEY

Jerseybus

Ex-Isle of Man Dennis Darts CMN 72-5/7/9X were delivered here shortly after the summer bus strike and are entering service suitably re-registered and repainted. The first three are 14, 28 and 9 (J 90172, 90241, 93500) and the others are to be 38, 53/5.

MCW Metrorider 28 (J 70708) has been scrapped, its Professional Business Systems overall advertisement being reapplied to 50 (J 71210).

The last of the long line of Willowbrook-bodied Fords, 14 (J 33617) of 1975, has finally gone; it is to be converted into a camper van at St Lawrence.

Pioneer Coaches

The Jersey Evening Post reports that this operator has sold out to Tantivy Blue Coach Tours. Only Waverley Tours now remains independent.

Before the takeover, which was reported in mid-November, a third Cannon Hilline/Leicester Carriage Builders Islander was added to the fleet. It is No5 (J 491), so similar No3 is now J 12050 (J 491) and Leyland Swift No5 is No7. Also new are Toyota Hiace minibuses J 14661/3.

Parts from MCW Metrorider E978 DGS were used to convert electric Optare MetroRider L803 HJO to diesel propulsion. Its three sisters ran the Island Hoppa service and received Jersey marks.

Sadly I have to report that AEC Regent III RT4045 (LUC 394) has passed to a scrapyard at Bellozanne, seven years after acquisition and storage.

The two unrefurbished Leyland Swifts G113 VMM and F172 SMT have been vandalised, but ex-Harrogate & District F173 SMT is in service as 30 (J 91574).

Tantivy Blue Coach Tours

65 (J 62568) has been under cannibalisation and 66 (J 62567) has been scrapped.

ISLE OF MAN

Isle of Man Transport

Rather surprising additions expected any time now are more low-floor double-deckers. They are stock DAF DB250LF/Optare Spectras, acquired from Arriva Bus & Coach (which supplied Eastbourne with DAFs when transport director David Howard was managing director there), 41-43 (MAN 41-43H); note the booking of old registrations, first issued in 1976. More low-floor double-deckers expected before the end of 2000 are further East Lancs Lolyne-bodied Dennis Tridents, to be 71-75, though their registrations had not been booked at the time of writing.

Withdrawn Dennis Darts 72-5/7/9 (CMN 72X etc) were sold to Jerseybus, St Helier during the school summer holidays.

All double-deckers are in the new fleet livery (pictured in Buses January 2000), except Olympians 65 and 88 which carry allover adverts. Most Lynxes are also repainted, with only 90/1/4 remaining in the earlier scheme. A start has been made on repainting the 25 Dennis Dart SLF/Marshalls; 18, 20 and 39 have been done so far.

Leyland National 28 (MAN 28N) was noted in Portsmouth recently about to be shipped to the Channel Islands. Leyland Atlantean 136 (CMN 36C, UOR 322T) is with the Silhouettes Dance Troupe of Chester.

Further to last month, it transpires there is no Leyland Lynx No98.

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Scottish reports should be sent, please, to **Sandy Macdonald, 12 Morton Gardens, Maxwell Park, Glasgow, G41 4AF** or by e-mail to: **sandybus@aol.com** to reach him by **17 January** for the **March** issue.

## Aberfeldy Motors

Jonckheere C51F-bodied Volvo B10M-60 XSV 892 (*G846 GNV*) was given back its original mark in October before being sold to Moseley (dealer), Glenmavis.

## Allander, Milngavie

Alexander-bodied Ailsa LHS 748V was sold to Gilchrist, Chapelton in September.

## Anderson, Langholm

Reeve Burgess Harrier C33F-bodied Leyland Swift LBM6T/2RSO G642 WMG was acquired in August from MacEwan, Amisfield.

## Arriva Scotland West AA

Plaxton Beaver 2 B31F-bodied Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814D R940 AMB arrived on loan from Mistral (dealer), Knutsford in late-September and was allocated to Barrhead depot with fleetnumber 100, but had departed again by October. Similar R934 AMB had also been returned to Mistral by September after its spell on loan.

Alexander-bodied Volvo Citybuses 949/50/2/4 have been given grey offside advertising including contravention for Coors Light beer. Plaxton Prestige-bodied DAF SB220GG 494 has been given a revised advertising livery for Icelandair, but is still mainly blue in its new guise.

Mercedes-Benz 709Ds 229, 303 and Dennis Darts 816/31/7-9 have been repainted into Arriva aquamarine and stone. Alexander Strider-bodied Scania L113 505 had not been repainted into these colours by November, contrary to previous reports, and was still in Clydeside red, yellow and white. Only about 30 active vehicles remain in these colours and Dennis Dart 841 is the last active bus in McGill livery.

MCW H43/28D-bodied MCW Metrobus DR101/14s 940/1 (KYV 705, 679X) were scrapped by the company in September and October respectively. ECW-bodied Bristol VR 926 (WRC 833S) was sold in September and subsequently noted in the yard of Dart, Paisley; it's not clear whether or not it had been purchased. Dormobile-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709D 315 (K91 RGA) has also been sold.

## Avondale, Greenock

Further recent additions are Reeve Burgess DP25F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709Ds G169/73/5 FJC, previously Arriva Cymru MMM369/73/5 and similar B31F-bodied 811D H419 FGS, previously Sovereign Bus & Coach 419.

## Bowman, Craginure

Duple Laser-bodied Leyland Tiger A985 JJU was sold to Hall, Kennoway in October.

## Bruce, Maud

Optare CityPacer B25F-bodied Volkswagen LT55 E900 LVE passed to Carver, Ellesmere Port in August.

## Bruce, Shotts

Caetano C49Ft-bodied Volvo B10M-62 R186 LBC was sold to Moseley (dealer), Glenmavis in November.

## Cheyne, Daviot

Reeve Burgess C25F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 609D F622 GRS was sold to Lees, Lumphannan in September.

## Christie, Alloa

Plaxton C51F-bodied Volvo B10M-61 RIB 6563 (*C175 LWB*) is another vehicle acquired from the Malcolm, Cowdenbeath fleet in September.

## Clarke, Port Glasgow

Rootes B20F-bodied Mercedes-Benz L608D LAZ 5929 (*C203 EJU*) and Wright B33F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 811D K85 DTM were acquired in October, the former having previously been with Harvey, Port Glasgow.

## Clydewide, Lanark

The Lesmahagow area shared taxi service operated on behalf of Strathclyde Passenger Transport was due to be cancelled on 24 December.

## Collison, Stonehouse

Autobus Classique C16F-bodied Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814Ds P533/5/6 PLB were purchased in November ex-Central Parking, Heathrow.

Onyx C24F-bodied Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814D R906 KGD was sold to MW (dealer), Staverton in October while Caetano Optimo C24F-bodied Toyota Coaster BB50R T3 BUS passed to Coates, Heald Green in November.

The Dumfries & Galloway Council contracted service between Sanquhar and Leadhills ended on 15 October.

## Cosgrove, Monifeith

Van Hool Alizée C49Ft-bodied Volvo B58-61 CGA 199X (*ADZ 9525, CGA 199X*) was acquired for spares in August from Robertson & Donald, Dundee.

## Crawford, Neilston

Van Hool-bodied Volvo B10M-62s M271 POS and M274 TSB were sold to Moseley (dealer), Glenmavis in November.

## Cutmore, Coatbridge

This firm, which trades as A Trip in Time, started operating Strathclyde Passenger Transport subsidised Sunday bus service 200 (Salsburgh-Monklands Hospital) on 12 November.

## Dawson, Stuartfield

Onyx C24F-bodied Mercedes-Benz Vario 614D X974 NRS was new in September. Plaxton-bodied Volvo B10M-61 1073 TD (*KSC 178X*) had been given back its original mark by August.

CH75Dt-bodied Van Hool Astromega TD824 LIL 2662 (*83 CN 79, OAA 357, MSU 587Y*) passed to Fairbrother, Warrington in August.

## Dickson, Paisley

The latest acquisitions are Phoenix DP25F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709D G241 GCC, previously Arriva Cymru MMM241 and Plaxton B27F-bodied Mercedes-Benz Vario O.810D R733 EGD ex-Knox, East Flodden.

## Doig, Glasgow

Onyx-bodied Mercedes-Benz 412D 311 ELK (*N202 ESF*) was given back its original mark in October before being sold to Western (dealer), Newbridge.

## Essbee, Coatbridge

X932 JDS and X626 JGE are Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814Ds which were new in October.

## Fairline, Glasgow

Jonckheere C51F-bodied Volvo B10M-62 M303 KRY was acquired in October ex-Ferris, Nantgarw and immediately re-registered XIW 1184. Jonckheere-bodied DAF SB2300 XIW 1184 (*F921 YNV*) was also re-registered then before being sold to Berkhof (dealer), Basingstoke.

## First Aberdeen FG

Wright Eclipse Fusion-bodied Volvo B7LAs 6, 7 were returned by First Edinburgh in early November after their spell on loan to that company. Alexander Royale-bodied Volvo Olympians 26/7 (R421/3 YMS) were returned to First Edinburgh at the same time.

One of the B7LAs has been allocated to the Bridge of Don park-&-ride service in lieu of a park-&-ride-liveried Optare Prisma due to increased loadings. Mercedes-Benz O.405G 1 is also currently allocated to this service.



The un-registered Alexander ALX400 H49/29F-bodied Volvo B7TL delivered in October is not to First Aberdeen specification and does not carry a farebox; fitting this equipment had proved impossible without damaging the electrics by mid-November and the vehicle was still mothballed at that time.

Irizar Century-bodied Scania K113 96 had lost its 'The Celebration Bus' branding by mid-November and was allover silver at that time.

Alexander-bodied Leyland Atlantean 315 (NRS 315W) was sold for scrap to Dunsmore (dealer), Larkhall in November.

The company has announced plans to convert the Aberdeen service network to Overground status in the early part of 2001, replacing the Gold Service concept.

## First Edinburgh FG

MCW H43/28D-bodied MCW Metrobus DR101/12 829 (GYE 487W) was acquired last July from First Capital where it was numbered 322, and has been allocated to Balfour depot. Around September, Alexander H45/32F-bodied Leyland Olympian ONLXB/1R 913 (A981 FLS) was transferred to this fleet from First Glasgow where it was numbered LO123, and it has been put to work from Galashiels depot.

Wright Eclipse Fusion-bodied Volvo B7LAs 6, 7 (W6, 7 FAL) were returned to First Aberdeen in early November after their spell on loan to this company. Alexander Royale-bodied Volvo Olympians 1421/3 (R421/3 YMS) were returned by First Aberdeen at the same time.

Dennis Darts 209/10; Leyland Tigers 321/6; MCW Metrobus 819; and Leyland Olympians 913/4/34 have been repainted into First Edinburgh livery.

Alexander-bodied Leyland Tigers 173/8 had been re-seated B60F, ex-B53F by August and similar 359 was DP49F, ex-B53F by that time. Duple-bodied Leyland Tiger 145 had been re-seated C51F ex-C49Ft by October.

## First Glasgow FG

Wright Access Foline-bodied Scania L94UBs SS126/37/8/40 (X426/39/41/3 UMS), some of the vehicles used to transport mourners at late First Minister Donald Dewar's funeral in October, entered service from Knightswood depot in November.

Plaxton Beaver 2 B27F-bodied Mercedes-Benz O.814D P812 REX has been transferred to this fleet from First Eastern Counties where it was numbered 812. Neither it nor similar P807-11 REX had entered service by mid-November, but it was expected that they would do so in early January when certain services were to be converted from full-size to minibus operation.

ECW-bodied Leyland Olympian CO57 is currently DPH45/28F ex-DPH45/24F, and may have been thus for some time.

Alexander-bodied Leyland Tigers ST341/5/7/68/73/5/85 have been transferred to the driver training fleet although they retain all-over red livery meantime.

Alexander-bodied Leyland Olympians LO123/5 (A981/3 FLS) were transferred to First Edinburgh and Thamesway respectively in August/September. Alexander-bodied Volvo Olympian VO103 (P204 TGD) was transferred to First Leeds in October.

Alexander-bodied Leyland Atlanteans LA510 (XGA 8J) and LA688 (HGD 894L), new originally to Glasgow Corporation Transport, have been acquired by Mike Rouliston, Glasgow for preservation.

## First Stop, Renfrew

Plaxton B25F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709D K233 SFJ, previously Plymouth Citybus 233, has been added to this fleet.

As reported last month, Docherty of Irvine has acquired two of Blackpool's prematurely withdrawn, early model Optare Excels to operate Irvine local services. Its smart A1-style blue and white livery blends with that of the A1-liveried Stagecoach Western Volvo Olympian waiting behind.

MURDOCH CURRIE



## Avondale provides more competition in Clydebank

Avondale Coaches of Greenock — best known as a local bus service operator in the ever-competitive Inverclyde area — has expanded its presence on the north side of the River Clyde with the introduction on 23 October of a 14-bus operation in Clydebank and west Glasgow. Vehicles were based initially at the Weir's Tours premises in Dock Street, Clydebank to provide services 100 (Linnvale-Drumchapel) and 200 (Faifley-Knightwood) which operate via the town centre on 10 minute frequencies, competing with DB Travel, PD Travel, John Morrow Coaches, and First

Glasgow which operate in the area along with McColl's Coaches, Arriva Scotland West and Glasgow Citybus.

Avondale recently obtained a substantial increase in its operator licence allowance and already operated Strathclyde Passenger Transport's Dial-a-Bus service in Clydebank.

Clydebank has seen sustained competition since bus services were deregulated in 1986. Strathclyde Buses and Kelvin Scottish (whose predecessors shared the town's traffic between them) competed intensely in

the late-1980s, with Kelvin's Routemaster operation on the routes to Glasgow, Faifley and Old Kilpatrick.

Another notable development at that time was the rise of John Morrow Coaches, run by a local man who knew the value of reintroducing old Central SMT routes and service numbers (Central was the Scottish Bus Group operator in the area until Kelvin's creation in 1985). The local service part of his business was sold to Kelvin in 1992 but the firm returned to this type of work a few years ago, but on a smaller scale.

## Public Transport Fund successes

On 9 November, Scottish transport minister Sarah Boyack announced that 19 new projects to improve public transport throughout Scotland are to receive a £33 million boost as a result of the third round of Public Transport Fund awards. Awards from last year's first two rounds of the fund saw 33 projects successfully secured with funding totalling £33 million. Third round bids were received from Strathclyde Passenger Transport Authority and 25 local authorities.

Eleven of the 19 winners include measures designed specifically to improve bus transport. Funds are being made available to Dumfries & Galloway (£943,000), Dundee (£1.465 million), East Lothian (£642,000), Glasgow (£2.136 million), and South Lanarkshire (£725,000) councils to extend bus priority measures to the Ninewells-Carnoustie and north east arterial routes in Dundee and various corridors in Glasgow, and introduce such measures in Musselburgh, Rutherglen and Stranraer.

Other successes include Edinburgh City Council which will develop further bus priorities together with park-&-ride and real-time information (£8.468 million); Falkirk Council for park-&-ride together with public transport access to the Falkirk Wheel (£1.6 million); Fife Council for a transport interchange at Markinch and a dedicated bus link between Leven and Glenrothes via Markinch (£1.551 million); and Highland Council for transport interchange facilities at Aviemore and at Inverness where the current bus station will be rebuilt next winter (£1.727 million).

## SPT SACKS COAKLEY FROM TENDERED ROUTES

Having suffered poor performance from the contractor for some time, Strathclyde Passenger Transport terminated its six local bus service contracts with the Motherwell-based Coakley Bus Company with effect from midnight on 8 November. Earlier performance-related problems with the company were compounded during September and October when a series of attacks on Coakley vehicles in various parts of Lanarkshire led the company to cease operating most evening journeys on its contracted services, leaving many communities without public transport.

Rather than continue some or all of the services commercially or cancelling with 42 days' notice, Coakley instead obtained the traffic commissioner's authority to withdraw all of the services within a few days.

To avoid further disruption to the travelling public, SPT arranged to have temporary replacement operators for the services in place whenever Coakley ceased running. By 13 November, Stagecoach Western had taken on services 14 (Hamilton-Bellshill, Mondays to Saturdays daytime) and 35 (Bellshill-Harthill, all day, daily); HAD Coaches was on services 66 (Wishaw-Harthill, early mornings, evenings and Sundays) and 211 (Airdrie-Eddlewood, evenings and Sundays) although the latter service was operated by First Glasgow for one day only on 12 November; First Glasgow was on service 205 (Fairhill-Hairmyres Hospital, mainly Mondays to Saturdays, daytime); and Hutchison's Coaches and HAD were sharing operation of service 101 (Monklands Hospital-Longriggend, Mondays to Saturdays). Tenders for long-term replacement contracts were invited by SPT on 14 November with an anticipated starting date in early January.

Coakley, meanwhile, was due to start half-hourly Monday to Saturday

commercial service 253 (Wishaw-Hairmyres Hospital) on 28 November. Other services were revised from that date, including the extension of 62 (Glasgow-Baillieston) to Hamilton.



Coakley Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer V700 CBC in Ingram Street, Glasgow last March on a short-lived commercial service run in direct competition with First Glasgow.

ALAN MILLAR

## ELLON PARK-&-RIDE STARTS RUNNING

Aberdeenshire Council's new £600,000 Ellon park-&-ride scheme — Scotland's first inter-urban scheme of this type — was launched on 6 November. Public Transport Fund money has been used to build the new 250-space, CCTV-monitored terminal 18 miles north of Aberdeen.

To launch the scheme, a timetable and introductory voucher campaign targeted 7,000 local households and various bus services in the Ellon area were re-routed to link the development to Inverurie, Peterhead, Fraserburgh, Dyce, Aberdeen Airport and industrial estates. In addition, a dedicated new service X50 has been introduced by Stagecoach Bluebird, running between the terminal and

Aberdeen city centre, with suitable branding on two buses. Service X50 is combined with the 250 and Peterhead services to create a 15 minute peak-hour frequency between Aberdeen and Ellon, dropping to every 20 minutes throughout the rest of the day until early evening.

The project has been designed to complement the Aberdeen City Council/First Aberdeen park-&-ride scheme at Bridge of Don, with the two councils and two bus operators working in conjunction with each other. Funding is in place for a similar scheme for Peterhead, but this proposal could be scaled down to meet some councillors' fear that Peterhead shoppers could be attracted to Aberdeen.



## Gibson, Renfrew

October additions to this fleet comprised Reeve Burgess B31F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 811D H404 FG5 ex-Yorkshire Coastliner 404; similar Plaxton B31F-bodied L2 SBC ex-Yorkshire Coastliner 402; and Plaxton B27F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 711D L656 MYG ex-Keighley & District 105.

## Gilchrist, Chapelton

This South Lanarkshire operator has acquired Alexander H44/35F-bodied Ailsa B55-10 LHS 748V from Allander, Milngavie.

## Gillen, Port Glasgow

Reeve Burgess B25F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709D F700 LCA and similar Robin Hood B29F-bodied F190 RRF were acquired last year, having previously been Arriva Midlands North 160/40.

From 26 November new Strathclyde Passenger Transport-supported service 145 (McInroy's Point-Gourock-Midton-Inverclyde Royal Hospital-Greenock, evenings and Sundays) was started as a replacement for Arriva services withdrawn at that time.

## Glasgow Citybus

Alexander B25F-bodied Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814D T154 AUA had left this fleet by November.

## Glen, Port Glasgow

Van Hool C38Ft-bodied Volvo B10M-48 N6 SOU was acquired in November ex-Southern, Barrhead.

## Gordon, Leslie

East Lancs-bodied Volvo Citybus A286 TSN was re-registered PJI 6085 in October.

## Hall, Kennoway

Duple Laser C57F-bodied Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/3R A985 JJU was purchased from Bowman, Craignure in October.

Plaxton-bodied Bristol LHS6L PJI 6085 (884 RCV, ROP 541R, YSU 953, RYS 943R) and Duple 425 integral coach YSU 572 (E205 EPB) were re-registered ROP 541R and E205 EPB in October and November respectively. The latter was then sold to Seymour, Harlow.

## Harte, Greenock

Reeve Burgess-bodied Mercedes-Benz 811D IIB 5213 (F158 DKU) was sold to Scottish, Port Glasgow in October.

## Horsburgh, Pumpherston

C19F-bodied Iveco 49.10 L846 HMS had left this fleet by August.

## Hunter, Sauchie

Van Hool C57F-bodied Scania K113CRB GSU 377 (L266 VUS) passed to this operator from Mitchell, Pleian in October in exchange for Jonckheere-bodied DAF SB2300 A595 JSA (OIW 5800, A124 SNH, NIL 4999, A124 SNH).

## Hutchison, Overtown

X303 JGE, one of the new Alexander ALX300-bodied Volvo B10BLEs, carries advertising material including contravention on its fleet livery for the Beaufort Van Centre, a Volkswagen dealer.

## Irvine, Law

Duple C53F-bodied Volvo B10M-61 ENF 568Y was purchased in October ex-West Dorset (part of First Southern National) 9010.

## Isbister, Walls

This Shetland operator merits a mention this month for acquiring Plaxton C45F-bodied Ford R1014 D741 WRC in October from TRS, Leicester; what makes this particularly notable is that the vehicle was owned by Priest & Thomson, Baltasound (Scotland's most northerly operator on the Shetland island of Unst) before passing to TRS in October 1998.

## JM Coaches, Port Glasgow

Alexander B21F-bodied Mercedes-Benz L608D D126 NUS was acquired in September.

## Keenan, Coalhall

Alexander H45/29F-bodied Leyland Atlantean AN68/R HGD 894L, new in May 1973 as Glasgow Corporation Transport LA688 and one of the last buses delivered to the corporation before Greater Glasgow PTE took over, has been sold for preservation.

## Keir, Kemnay

Northern Counties B25F-bodied Dodge S56 E106 JPL was acquired in August ex-Marsh, Skegness and Irizar C46F-bodied Volvo B58-61 WDS 283V (SIA 929, VFS 392V, RPP 734, LUJ 456V) followed in October ex-Campbell, Clydebank. Berkhof C49Ft-bodied Volvo B10M-61 A828 NTW was sold in August.

## Kiwi, Newton Stewart

Plaxton C53F-bodied Volvo B10M-60 F129 AEL (A17 EXC, F457 WFX) was acquired in October ex-Silverdale, New Stevenston. Plaxton C53F-bodied AEC Reliance DKY 866V went to Moseley (dealer), Glenmavis at that time in part-exchange.

## Liddell, Auchinleck

Plaxton C29F-bodied Bedford VAS5 DWU 37T was purchased in August ex-Stephenson, Anfield.

## Lothian

Dennis Trident 597 is registered X597 UKS; having originally had registration X597 USC booked for it, but owing to an error it had to be re-registered. A higher X-USC mark was turned down in order to maintain a match with the fleetnumber.

Plaxton Paramount-bodied Leyland Tiger 71 and Berkhof Axial-bodied Dennis Javelin 80 have been repainted into the new white, madder and cherry red coach livery. On repaint, all Leyland and Volvo Olympians are being given blue fabric seating trim instead of the traditional red 'leather'.

As mentioned previously, the latest Plaxton President-bodied Dennis Tridents have been fitted with Dennis front wheel embellishers, with the exception of 557 which carries Volvo ones for some reason.

## McColl, Balloch

Northern Counties-bodied Leyland Atlantean AN68D/1R was acquired by Abbeyways Hanson, Halifax last March and Caetano C53F-bodied DAF MB230 F195 PNR had passed to Averon, Clydebank by October.

## MacEwan, Amisfield

Jonckheere-bodied DAF SB2300s JIL 5655 (A2 WKC, A111 SNH) and YIB 4758 (A139 VYF, IIW 372, A582 XRP) were acquired in August from Sinnamon, Dungannon. Seating is C51F and C49Ft respectively.

## McKindless, Wishaw

MCW Metroliner DR130/4 QJI 9453 (A146 BSC) was given back its original mark last February and sold in July to Day, Kilnhurst for spares.

## McNairn, Coatbridge

Alexander B33F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 811D G32 OHS was acquired in August ex-Arriva Scotland West 325.

## MacPhail, Newarthill

X472 KUT is a new Jonckheere-bodied Volvo B10M-62 which had joined this fleet by November.

## McQueen, Garelochhead

Plaxton DP33F-bodied Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814D X443 JHS was new in November.

## Mairs, Aberdeen FG

Scott-bodied Mercedes-Benz 609D 715 has been repainted into the new blue coach livery.

Plaxton Paramount-bodied DAF MB230 741 (XWL 539, J795 KHD) had been given back its original mark and withdrawn from service by mid-November.

## Marbill, Beith

Van Hool-bodied Volvo B10M-61 GJI 926 (E959 CGA, LSK 871, E641 UNE) was re-registered E582 CNS in November after being sold to Moseley (dealer), Glenmavis in October.

Having sold all of its newer Leyland Lynxes, Lothian has refurbished some of its Leyland National 2s, including 144 (B144 KSF) which now wears this Newcastle-style yellow/white livery for a free shuttle service to the National Art Galleries.

RICHARD WALTER





## Mathieson, Inverness

Crest C24F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 614D W6 AMY was new in August. Caetano Optimo C21F-bodied Toyota Coaster HDB30R J254 MFP had left the fleet by September.

## Mayne, Buckie

W555 GSM is a Berkhof-bodied Volvo B10M-62 which was new in May. Jonckheere-bodied Volvo B10M-62s M222 GSM and M444 GSM were sold to Moseley (dealer), Glenmavis in September with similar Van Hool-bodied P500 GSM following in October; the first two then passed to Sim, Boot and Milligan, Mauchline respectively.

## Melvin, Dyce

Reeve Burgess B25F-bodied Dodge S56s F114/6 JTO were acquired at the end of 1999 ex-Nottingham City Transport 114/6.

## Milligan, Mauchline

Three vehicles acquired in October comprised Duple C51Ft-bodied Volvo B10M-61 E743 JAY ex-Hill, Wolverhampton 2; similar C57F-bodied F481 WFX ex-Silverdale, Wilford; and Jonckheere C53F-bodied Volvo B10M-62 M444 GSM ex-Mayne, Buckie.

Caetano-bodied Volvo B10M-61 IIL 6234 (C683 KDS) was sold to Moseley (dealer), Glenmavis in October.

## Mitchell, Plean

Optare Solera C35F-bodied Mercedes-Benz O.1120L X833 HEE has joined this fleet, having been exhibited at ExpoCoach in Birmingham.

Van Hool C57F-bodied Scania K113CRB GSU 377 (L266 VUS) passed to Hunter, Sauchie in October in exchange for Jonckheere-bodied DAF SB2300 A595 JSA (OIW 5800, A124 SNH, NIL 4999, A124 SNH).

Reeve Burgess-bodied Leyland Swift A2 YOU (UBM 880, F36 TMP) had been re-registered F783 DMS by October when it was sold to Grenfell, Motherwell.

## Moffat & Williamson, Gaudry

Plaxton Cheetah C33F-bodied Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814D X937 MSP was new in October.

## Nicoll, Laurencekirk

Van Hool Alizée C53F-bodied Volvo B10M-60 F381 ASJ (BJI 6863, F924 NSH, MIL 3724, F548 TMH) was purchased in October ex-Walker, Neilston. Similar B10M-61 C534 DND was re-registered A12 MWN some time ago.

Reeve Burgess C32F-bodied MAN MT8.136 B920 BGA was sold to Moseley (dealer), Glenmavis in October and subsequently passed to Collins, Bangor.

## Nicolson, Bove

Duple C57F-bodied Volvo B10M-61 D146 ENV (RDU 4, D146 ENV, A8 CLN, D36 ENH) had joined this fleet by September ex-Astons, Worcester.

## Orion, Wemyss Bay

Optare Vecta B41F-bodied MAN 11.190 M10 DVS entered service in yellow fleet livery in October; although ex-Black Prince, Morley its original registration is not yet known.

## Park, Hamilton

Van Hool C53F-bodied Volvo B10M-62s LSK 498 and LSK 845 (LSK 555) were transferred back to this fleet from subsidiary Trathens, Plymouth in October.

Many Van Hool-bodied Volvo B10M-62s were re-registered in October comprising LSK 504, KSK 950, LSK 511-3, 844 (LSK 444), 500/10, 845 (LSK 555), 499, 501/3/7/2/6, 874, 498, 505/8/9/14, KSK 985 (R904 JGA) to R398/9, 401-5/7-10/3-6/21/4-9 EOS; and KSK 951-3/86 (R901-3/5 JGA) back to their original marks.

Van Hool-bodied Volvos N443/5/70/98 PYS (HSK 643-5, LSK 824) were acquired by Rich, Croydon in July/August; similar LSK 875 (R906 JGA) was transferred to Trathens, Plymouth in July; and Van Hool-bodied Scania N137 YMS was acquired by Ferguson, Bedford last March.

## Pegasus, Perth

Plaxton-bodied Volvo B10M-60 G71 RGG had been re-registered FIL 7661 by August.

## Rapsons Coaches RN

Alexander ALX300 B44F-bodied Volvo B10BLE 208 (W747 NAS) was new in July and has been allocated to the Shalder Coaches operation.

Vehicles acquired with the business of Morrison, Castletown in August comprised Van Hool C30F-bodied ACE Puma 062 (GSU 375, B629 MSF); Caetano Optimo C18F-bodied Toyota Coaster HB31R 063 (G964 SFT); Carlyle DailyBus B25F-bodied Iveco 49.10 064 (PIL 7631, F23 XVP); Onyx M16-bodied Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 412D 065 (P454 SSK); Plaxton C53F-bodied Leyland Leopard PSU3E/4R 174 (TWN 698S); Van Hool C46F-bodied Volvo B10M-61 469 (OFA 990); similar C49F-bodied 471 (RIB 8035, B450 GCB, XTW 359, B471 UNB) and 472 (NFL 881); and Plaxton C49F-bodied DAF MB200 470 (A103 EBC). 062-4, 174 were quickly withdrawn while 065, 469/71/2 were allocated to Thurso and 470 transferred to Kirkwall.

Two other recent second-hand additions are Plaxton C53F-bodied Volvo B10M-60 652 (F437 DUG, DSK 558, F437 DUG) ex-Safeguard, Guildford around June and B26F Optare MetroRider MR03 066 (H166 VWT) ex-Chalkwell, Sittingbourne around September. 066 was repainted into two-tone blue livery and allocated to Fort William, while 652 was re-registered MIL 9752 and allocated to Thurso. The latter vehicle is now listed by the operator as C51F.

Plaxton-bodied Volvo B10M-62 613 had been re-registered from L592 RST to ESK 930 by October. Optare MetroRider 044 and Leyland Leopard 150 have been repainted into the two-tone blue livery.

Plaxton Premiere-bodied Volvo B10M-60 433 (ESK 985, 318 DHR, G260 UAS) was renumbered 604 around October.

Alexander-bodied Renault S56s 020/1 (E404/5 TBS) had left the fleet by August.

## Rowe, Muirkirk

Plaxton C49F-bodied Volvo B10M-62 M515 NCG (A7 EXC) was acquired in September ex-Harris, Grays 35.

Plaxton-bodied Dennis Javelin H157 HAC was re-registered VJI 9412 in October; Plaxton-bodied Volvo B10M-60 VJI 9412 (F47 LRA) was also re-registered at that time but its new mark is not yet known.

## Scottish, Port Glasgow

Reeve Burgess B26F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 811D IIB 5213 (F158 DKU) was purchased from Harte, Greenock in October, replacing Reeve Burgess-bodied Mercedes-Benz L608D D957 UDY which was sold to JM Coaches, Port Glasgow at that time.

## Shuttle Buses, Kilwinning

New hourly Strathclyde Passenger Transport subsidised service 13 (Irvine-Stewarton via Kilmaurs) was started on 13 November, and offers the first-ever direct link between Kilmaurs and Irvine. A new Plaxton Beaver 2 B31F-bodied Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814D has been ordered for this work.

Reeve Burgess DP19F-bodied Mercedes-Benz L608D D99 VCC and Leyland Nationals NIL 7241, JTV 593T have all been broken up on site. They were all acquired for spares although JTV 593T was used in service for about a month early in 1999.

## Silver Choice, East Kilbride

Bova FHD12-340 M174 XTC (660 FHU) was re-registered SJI 9994 in September.

## Silverdale, New Stevenston

Plaxton Beaver 2 B31F-bodied Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814D X681 USX was new in November. It replaced Alexander B27F-bodied Mercedes-Benz O.810D R971 MGB, sold to Western (dealer), Newbridge at that time, while Plaxton-bodied Volvo B10M-61 F129 AEL (A17 EXC, F457 WFX) passed to Kiwi, Newton Stewart in October.

## Simpson, Rosehearty

Jonckheere C53F-bodied Volvo B10M-62 M570 DSJ (LSK 870) was acquired in October ex-Kerslake, Trethomas.

PMT-bodied Mercedes-Benz 609D MAZ 8250 (E362 XCA) was sold to Walker, Fochabers in March 1999 and Jonckheere C51F-bodied Volvo B10M-60 JIL 3585 (G841 GNV) passed to Volvo Coach Sales (dealer), Loughborough in October.

### Group codes

AA	—	Arriva
	—	Passenger
	—	Services
DG	—	DelGro
FG	—	FirstGroup
NX	—	National
	—	Express
	—	Group
RN	—	Rapsons
ST	—	Stagecoach
YT	—	Yorkshire
	—	Traction

Shetland fleetnames are worn by Rapsons Volvo B10BLE/Alexander ALX300 208 (W747 NAS) operated by the Shalder Coaches fleet and seen here in Lerwick bus station.

M. L. WEYELL

W366 ABD is one of the Dennis/Plaxton Mini Pointer Darts added recently to the Waverley Travel fleet in Edinburgh for expanded tendered service commitments, including this former First Edinburgh route.

TONY WILSON





## Stagecoach Bluebird ST

Plaxton-bodied Volvo coaches 607-9/40 have been repainted from allover white into full fleet livery including Royal Warrant crests. Similar 579 and 616 have been given front and side lettering for Ellon park & ride.

Further to the November issue, Leyland Olympians 045/53, Mercedes-Benz 709D 309 and Volvo B10M-61 559 were not transferred to the JW Coaches fleet in August as previously reported. Transfers which did, however, take place in September comprised Alexander-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709Ds 300 (J216 XKY) and 305 (G194 PAO). These two were followed in October by similar 259 (G259 TSL), Alexander-bodied Leyland Tiger 453 (D439 XRS, 147 YFM, D439 XRS), and Plaxton-bodied Tiger 457 (CSO 587Y, A601 JSA, VLT 245, BYJ 919Y, 404 DCD, XUF 534Y). 453 was repainted into Stagecoach-style JW Coaches livery on transfer, while Alexander-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709Ds 306/7/9 were given these colours in August.

Plaxton-bodied Volvo B10M-62s 619/20 (N619/20 USS) were transferred to Stagecoach Fife in November. Carlyle-bodied Mercedes-Benz 811D 243 (H103 HDV) was sold last July and Alexander-bodied Leyland Olympian ONLXB/1RV 37 (YSO 37Y) was acquired by Stephenson, Rochford in September.

## Stagecoach Fife ST

Plaxton Expressliner C44F-bodied Volvo B10M-62s 525/6 (N619/20 USS) were transferred to this fleet in November from Stagecoach Bluebird where they were numbered 619/20. They have been allocated to Cowdenbeath depot.

Leyland Titan 759 was repainted into Stagecoach livery around August.

Leyland National SD3 (UFG 60S) was sold to Hall, Kennoway in September and Alexander-bodied Leyland Leopard 181 (PSX 181Y) was sold to Muir (dealer), Kirkcaldy in October for scrap.

## Stagecoach Glasgow ST

By October Alexander Sprint-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709D 003 (N603 VSS) had been transferred to this fleet from Stagecoach Western in exchange for similar 242 (G276 TSL).

Despite having been sold to Dunsmore (dealer), Larkhall some time ago, former AA Buses Leyland National 708 (YSJ 14T) remains with this company and is used as a staff rest room in Cowcaddens depot.

Further to the September issue, the combined Castlemilk-Drumchapel service was numbered 20.

## Stagecoach Western ST

New Super Pointer Darts 405-10 all entered service in September from Ayr depot, complete with Lo-Liner logos, side destination displays and a rear route number display. They are normally used on Ayr town service A1.

By October Alexander Sprint-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709D 003 (N603 VSS) had been transferred to Stagecoach Glasgow in exchange for similar 242 (G276 TSL).

Dennis Dart 400 has been given corporate livery in lieu of AA Buses green and cream colours.

Vehicles transferred to Stagecoach Cumberland from 6 November with the Annan area operations comprised Alexander Sprint-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709Ds 262/3 (M662/3 FYS) and Alexander-bodied Leyland Leopards 633/7/41/9 (GCS 33/7, 41/9V), 670 (TSJ 70S), 682 (GSO 82V); Leyland-bodied Leyland Titans 944/6 (GYE 254/81W), 958 (OHV 809Y) have also gone to Cumberland at Lancaster, having been, as reported previously, on loan to that company from 13 September.

## Strathlath Yt

B33F MCW Metrorider MF154/12 213 (E197 BNS) was added to this fleet in November, having previously been Yorkshire Traction 351.

B29F Plaxton Mini Pointer Dart demonstrator V680 FPB remained on loan from Dennis for only a few days from 24 October and was used from Dundee depot on services 71 and 77.

Dormobile Routemaker-bodied Renault S56 109 (G892 FJW) and MCW Metrorider 174 (F235 HTO) were sold for scrap in October.

New Perth & Kinross Council service 65 (Woodlands Park-Moyness Park-Blaigowrie town centre) started on 9 October and offers four Wednesday journeys.

## Stuart, Carluke

Two unusual vehicles were acquired from the Geoff Amos, Eydon fleet in August in the shape of Duple Dominant B63F-bodied Bedford YNT A140 TNV and unique Reeve Burgess B71F-bodied Dennis Dorchester SDA807 B368 KNH.

## Wait, Chirnside

Berkhof C53F-bodied Volvo B10M-61 DSV 698 was acquired in August ex-Frodingham, North Frodingham.

## Walker, Fochabers

PMT C21F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 609D MAZ 8250 (E362 XCA) was purchased in March 1999 ex-Simpson, Rosehearty.

## Waverley, Edinburgh

Further to the November issue, the second Plaxton Mini Pointer Dart is registered X183 BNH.

## Wilson, Carnwath

Beulas C49F-bodied Iveco EuroRider 391E W664 SJF was new in July. Similar P381 ARY went back to Coach Europe (dealer), Ratby at that time. Correcting the November issue, Plaxton-bodied DAF SJ1 1976 (501 KAA, WFE 36, C467 SSF) was in fact sold to McLean, Whitburn in August and not acquired.

## Wilson, Gourrock

Wright B26F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 811D NDZ 7932 was acquired in September ex-Metroliner London Northern MW32.

# FLEET IN FOCUS

<b>FLEET:</b>	Southern Coaches (NM) Ltd
<b>BASED:</b>	Lochlibo Road, Barrhead, East Renfrewshire
<b>FOUNDED:</b>	20 November 1950, as a hobby, by Messrs Jamieson, McInyre and Wallace who were a chemist, a haulage contractor and a farmer. The company was based then at Newton Mearns and when formed, had to incorporate 'NM' in its title as there was another company elsewhere called Southern Coaches. From small beginnings, the company has grown to its present size by a gradual process of expansion, and moved to its present premises (which were originally stables for horses believed to have been used for stage coach services — the Annie Oakley rather than the Ann Gloag variety — between Barrhead and Irvine) around 1955.
<b>WHERE DOES IT OPERATE?:</b>	In addition to school contracts and the usual hires, the company also does certain football hires for trusted, long-term groups of supporters. Tours are carried out within the UK, as are day trips in the summer season. Cruise ship work is now increasingly important.
<b>LIVERY:</b>	Since the start, most vehicles have been in a livery of cream and turquoise, the latter shade having changed slightly to allow the use of vinyl treatments, and in more recent years orange touches have been added.
<b>HOW MANY VEHICLES?:</b>	20 O-discs are held and currently 18 coaches are owned, comprising 14 Van Hool or Plaxton-bodied Volvos, two DAFs with Van Hool and Ikarus bodywork and two Caetano-bodied Toyotas. All vehicles bought in the past seven or eight years have been new to the company, with three or four being bought each year. The company's high quality and low-mileage operations make its vehicles attractive purchases for other firms.
<b>MOST UNUSUAL VEHICLE?:</b>	Having followed a policy of buying standard types, the company has no unusual vehicles but Ikarus 350-bodied DAF SB3000WS P70 SOU is probably the least common. All vehicles carry SOU registrations, with single, double or triple digits selected on a rota to allow registrations to reflect the dates on which monthly inspections will be carried out e.g. N2 SOU on the 2nd of the month, P50 SOU on the 15th and W600 SOU on the 26th.



Plaxton Premiere-bodied Volvo B10M-62 W500 SOU was added to the Southern fleet last March.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

R. Barker, M. Barrington, N. Cram, T. & E. Docherty, First Glasgow, S. Hulse, G. Munro, B. Nicol, PSV Circle, Shuttle Buses, J. Sinclair, Stagecoach Bluebird, Stagecoach Glasgow, Stagecoach Western, R. Walter, Western Enthusiasts Club and White Star Motors have contributed items of news this month. Their assistance is gratefully acknowledged.



# Glasgow's Newest Bus Museum

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- **Vehicles to be Rallied**

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Rewards for hard work lie in seeing vehicles which would otherwise pass into history without trace, having a working life in preservation.

As all the vehicles are intended for rallying, there will be opportunities to prepare for rallies and drivers will be required to make the journeys.

## ***Vehicles forming the initial collection are:***

<b><i>Exhibit Number</i></b>	<b><i>Registration</i></b>	<b><i>Description</i></b>	<b><i>Fleet Number</i></b>
M1	BUS 181	A.E.C. Regent III Tow Wagon	AR292
M2	FYS 7	A.E.C. Matador Recovery Wagon	R1
M3	FYS 8	A.E.C. Matador Recovery Wagon	R2
M4	FYS 10	A.E.C. Matador Recovery Wagon	R4
M5	FYS 996	BUT ETB1 Trolleybus	TBS 21
M6	FYS 999	Daimler CVG6-30	D217
M7	HUS 675	Albion Victor FT21N	BS1
M8	HUS 676	Albion Victor FT21N	BS2
M9	SGD 65	Leyland PD2/24	L163
M10	SGD 239	Daimler CVG6	D256
M11	SGD 241	Daimler CVG6	D258
M12	SGD 448	Leyland PD3	L446
M13	SGD 491	A.E.C. Regent V	A341
M14	SGD 500	A.E.C. Regent V	A350
M15	WLT 759	A.E.C. Routemaster	RM759
M16	VML 5G	Leyland Atlantean	LE5
M17	XGA 8J	Leyland Atlantean	LA510
M18	HGD 894L	Leyland Atlantean	LA688
M19	FSU 102T	Leyland Atlantean	LA1285
M20	RDS 597W	Leyland Atlantean	LA1408
M21	UGB 193W	Leyland Atlantean	LA1440
M22	CUS 297X	Leyland Atlantean	LA1442
M23	UGB 196W	Leyland Atlantean	LA1443
M24	CUS 302X	Leyland Atlantean	LA1448
M25	GGG 300N	Volvo Ailsa	AV1

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Belfast, BT6 9RG**

Reports on Irish Republic operators, please, to:  
**Ian Molloy, Willow Grove, Newtownpark Avenue,  
Blackrock, Co Dublin.**  
or by e-mail to: [ntpa@eircom.net](mailto:ntpa@eircom.net).

**Ulster's first busway opens**

Following last year's opening of the first ever bus lane using the hard shoulder of a motorway, phase two of Belfast's M1/Westlink bus priority route opened on 6 November. This comprises 810m along Westlink, including over 500m of it as offside bus lane, and 980m of exclusive segregated busway running from Westlink at Roden Street directly to Europa Buscentre. Including the first phase, time savings of 8.5 minutes have been achieved over the two-mile heavily congested section of route during the morning peak period. Services deriving the benefit are the Ulsterbus Goldline Express routes from the west and south of the province, although a limited service is also being introduced on two new routes serving suburban estates on the west side of Belfast, while peak hour express journeys on one Citybus route also use the busway. Bus Eireann and Ulsterbus Goldline operations on the joint Belfast-Dublin route will also benefit.

**IRISH MAJOR****Ulsterbus**

In a change of policy, the latest order for the Ulsterbus Tours fleet — due for May delivery — calls for five Volvo B12Ms with 360hp engines and air conditioned Caetano Enigma C49Ft bodies. The white livery with two-tone blue and green relief is to be adapted to suit the Caetano body styling.

Three vehicles reinstated from the reserve fleet are Bristol RELL6G/Alexander 2305/6 (TOI 2305/6) at Coleraine and Omagh and Leyland Leopard/Alexander 120 (ROI 120) at Larne; the Leopard, however, is being used as a towing vehicle. Volvo B10BLE/Wright Renown 2830 (CCZ 8830) at Coleraine has been delicensed with accident damage. Volvo B7R/Plaxton Prima W38 DOE returned to the British mainland on 3 November.

Leyland Tiger/Alexander N-types 1156/86 (MXI 3156, NXI 1186) have exchanged allocations between Laganside and Coleraine to expose the Morrison Homes super rear advertisement on the latter to a new audience. Similar Tigers 1171/3 (MXI 3171/3) have lost their Lisnagelvin Shopping Centre super rear and Health & Safety overall advertisements for fleet livery, but 1276 (OXI 1276) has gained a Smirnoff Ice super rear.

Mercedes-Benz 709D/Wright Busybus 846 (NXI 6846) has transferred from Newtownards to Newry and Leyland Leopard/Alexander 205 (VOI 205) has moved from Downpatrick to Enniskillen. As a result, similar vehicles have gone into reserve, viz. Leopard 150 (ROI 150) at Enniskillen and 709D 829 (NXI 6829) at Newry. Two delicensed Leopards re-registered to release their original marks for cherished transfer are 119/50 (ROI 119/50) now HCZ 1770/886.

Flexibus Optare MetroRider 1816 (JAZ 1816) has gone into an experimental livery of white with a bold upward curve of blue edged with Translink turquoise towards the rear. The blue is the slightly purple shade introduced with the Ulsterbus low-floor livery and not used on other types until now. The luggage racks fitted for its previous role on Airbus services have been truncated.

Standard Ulsterbus-liveried Dennis Dart SLF/Wright Crusader 647 (YAZ 8647) — operated by Flexibus — has had its livery adapted to promote a new Eastside park-&-ride service introduced on behalf of Road Service from 13 November. The livery style is similar to that on Dart 645 which has operated a similar Northside service since new. Both services offer 15-minute all-day frequencies, extended to cover late shopping hours in Belfast city centre during the pre-Christmas period. A second Flexibus vehicle — usually 647 before the launch of the Eastside service — is required for the Northside route during the morning and evening peaks.

**Citybus**

Volvo B10L/Alexander Ultra 2713 (LAZ 2713) has been written off after sustaining malicious damage last July..

Leyland Tiger/Alexander Q-type coaches from the dedicated City Express fleet have been placed in reserve from Newtownabbey but are to remain active as float replacements for the Ulsterbus fleet pending

their move to a new permanent base.

Leyland Tiger/Alexander N-type 2603 (LXI 6603) has gained an all-over advertisement for Guinness while five Tigers in Smirnoff Ice super rear livery are N-types 2602/11 (LXI 6602, NXI 4611) and Q-types 2647/62/78 (SXI 2647, VXI 266/78).

**Dublin Bus**

The highest numbered Volvo B7TL/Alexander ALX400 H49/27F delivered by late-November was AV136, but there were gaps in the lower number ranges as deliveries have been coming from Alexander's Falkirk and Belfast plants. Those not yet delivered were Donnybrook's AV91/2, Summerhill's AV115/20-30 and Brondstone's AV134/5 (including Airlink-destined AV120-9). AV51 and 68 played a central role in the official launch of the new low-floor double-deckers when public enterprise minister Mary O'Rourke performed the honours at Point Depot on 9 November. AV65-8 have been delivered to Clontarf, AV72-90 to Donnybrook (AV89/90 are in white wedding livery) and AV93-105 at Conyngham Road. AV106-10 have been on loan from Broadstone to Summerhill pending delivery of its own AVs.

Also delivered are Volvo B7LA/Wrightbus Eclipse Fusion articulated buses AW1-3/5, their arrival prompting the return of similar demonstrator A1 (00 D 31079) to Wrightbus, and more of the latest Volvo B6BLE/Wright Crusader 2 midibuses. Of the latter, WV21-30/2/5-9 have been delivered and all 20 (WV21-40) were expected to take up duties from the new Broadstone garage on route 123 from 4 December.

The arrival of the new double-deckers has further reduced the number of Irish-built, green-liveried Bombardier double-deckers and GAC City Bus single-deckers left in the fleet. A Bombardier Farewell Trip, using withdrawn KD353, has been scheduled for Saturday 13 January, following the northern section of route 11, a formal stopover at Dublin Bus's head office at 59 Upper O'Connell Street before going on to the Transport Museum Society of Ireland's museum at Howth where it is expected to join the permanent collection; the TMSI's GAC KC100 (acquired instead of KC79) may also participate in this historic event.

Most recent withdrawals have been of GACs KC48, 69, 71 (KZG 48, 69, 71), KC100/17/21/68 (UZG 100 etc)

and KC191 (LZS 191) and Bombardiers KD122/53 (JZL 122/53), KD223/58 (OZU 223/58) and KD313/5/21/2/30/3/56/8/60/1/5 (GSI 313 etc); most went for scrap, but KC100 is to be preserved, KC121/68 are expected to become Bus Eireann school buses and KD223 has become a temporary driver trainer.

Also withdrawn are Leyland Atlantean/Van Hool (Belgian-built prototype) closed top tour bus DF603 (603 ZO) which may go for preservation, while derofeed Leyland Olympian RH22 is likely to become an open-topper and RH19, 20, 65-7 are expected to become driver trainers. The B6BLEs should have freed up Mercedes-Benz 709D/Eurocoach B23F ME1-14/6-21 (93 D 10001-10, 94 D 2011-4/6-21) which have been sold to Avondale, Greenock whose expansion is chronicled in this month's Scottish Column.

Livery changes have seen DAF SB220 AD36 lose Airlink colours for core fleet blue/cream/orange which also is worn by Volvo B10Ls VL1-3 and is also to go on to AD53/4 following withdrawal of the Icon shuttle service on 12 November, while Airlink Volvo Olympians RV513, 639 are in City Swift colours.

Smirnoff Ice mega-rear adverts have been applied to Olympians RH31, 143/62/74, RA178, 228/92, RV384, while I-touch mega-rears have gone on DAFs AD41, P25, 30/7, RA182 has a Digifone-on-Line scheme (ex-HB Solero) and RH112 carries one for Disney Dinosaur. Those which previously carried mega-rears were RH112 and RA182 (HB Solero), RH143 (Clairrol), RH174 (Club Orange), RA292 (Enerzizer), RV384 (Bacardi) and P30 (Worldcom). AD59 has lost its Burger King mega-rear.

Since 13 November, route 51A (Lower Abbey Street-Beaumont Hospital) has been reduced to two to three weekday peak journeys.

**Bus Eireann**

The first confirmed orders for 2001 call for another 27 SI-class Scania/Irizar touring coaches which are to be purchased rather than leased and are to displace the 29CIE Tours MH-class Mercedes-Benz O.404s on to Expressway duties.

Delivery of the 2000 order for Volvo B10M/Plaxton Excalibur coaches has been completed with the arrival of VP344-7 (00 D 98894/9/901/893); VP343

Ulsterbus's ageing fleet still includes Leyland Leopards with Alexander (Belfast) bodies. 251 (WOI 2251) is seen loading in Scotch Street, Dungannon in September.

JOHN G. GOAN



Dublin Bus is planning a farewell to its last Bombardier double-deckers in January. This is an August 1998 view of KD128 (128 JZL) of 1982.

ALAN MILLAR



(00 D 98891) has been allocated to Cork.

DAF SB120CS/Wright Cadet midibuses DWM4, 9, 12/4/5 had not entered service by late-November.

News of the KCS-class school buses being created out of acquired Dublin Bus GAC City Buses is that the current agreed list is of KCS113/21/38/9/68/73/95-7, 202. Conversion work by Louth Commercial and Caraher & Ward of Dundalk involves rebuilding from B35D to B45F layout (providing three-for-two space for 67 children), with the entrance reduced to single width as on the GAC Rural Buses to make space for school

bag storage. By 19 November, KC113/39/95 were ready for the long journey from Louth to Tralee; others (e.g. KC 116/8/9) may go to Waterford.

Existing vehicles converted to school buses are Leyland Tigers PLS61/2 (ex-PL61/2), DAF MB230/Plaxton PDS 38 (ex-PD38) GAC City Buses KCS107/80/6/93 (ex-KC107 etc) and Rural Buses KS61, 77, 81, 109/23/4/7, 210 (ex-KR61 etc).

Withdrawals include 12m Leyland Leopards MDS2, MGS4, MS14, MGS46, 52, 73, MDS100/45, MS162, MDS169 (2 IK etc) and leased Dennis Dart SLFs

DPL1, 3, 4, 6, 14/8/9.

As part of the viability plan, special weekend services to West Clare (Dublin, Cook Street-Lahinch/Miltown Malbay) have been contracted out to Callinan of Galway, often using ex-Bus Eireann Volvo VP55.

## IRISH INDEPENDENTS

### Aircoach, Dublin

Caetano Enigma Volvo B10M00 D 95822/909/15/7/20 have been added to this fleet.

### Birchall, Celbridge

86 KE 640 is a recently-acquired Leyland Olympian with Northern Counties body. It is in a red/yellow/blue livery and its former fleetnumber appears to have been 4120

### Edwards, Enniscorthy

Gardner 6HLX-engined Leyland National 11351A/1R/B49F 78 WX 611 (GMB 3807) has been acquired ex-Arriva North West.

### Guide Friday

Thanks to Peter Horridge of the PSV Circle and Anthony Dee of Guide Friday, I can report that the current Irish fleet of Leyland Atlantean open-toppers comprises ex-Lothian Alexander-bodied 73 KE 523 (BFS 42L), ex-Nottingham East Lancs-bodied 75 KE 517/20/114/6/7 (GVO 719/4/6N, JAL 880N, MAU 616/2P) and 78 KE 560 (ARC 645T), ex-Nottingham Northern Counties-bodied 78 KE 547/9 (XNN 662/3S), ex-Brighton 78 KE 566 (TYJ 12S) and ex-Grampian Alexander-bodied 80 G 704 (HRS 278V). 75 KE 520 is allocated to Cork, the others to Dublin. Ex-Nottingham East Lancs-bodied 73 KE 513 (OTO 542M) has been scrapped.

### J. J. Kavanagh

A third ex-London Leyland Titan for the Kenneally, Waterford fleet is Leyland-bodied 84 W 366 (A623 THV). It is used on school services and as a spare bus.

### Local Link, Mullingar

A new town service began last summer using minibuses registered 88 WH 2680 and 89 G 6984/6.

### Sproughan, Bagnalstown

This Co Carlow operator has acquired former Bus Eireann Volvo B10M/Plaxton coach VP66 for use chiefly on sub-contracted relief journeys for its former owner. Callinane, Galway operates former VP55 (97 D 28784) on a similar basis.

## Group codes

AA — Arriva  
Passenger  
Services  
BL — Blazefield  
Holdings  
EY — EYMS Group  
FB — First Bus  
GA — Go-Ahead  
Group  
MT — MTL  
Holdings  
NX — National  
Express  
ST — Stagecoach  
Holdings  
YT — Yorkshire  
Traction



Top left:

A surprising survivor seen last June at Mountmellick is rebodied Leyland Royal Tiger/Plaxton Panorama ZV 2428 (EJR 791) operated by Universal of Portlaoise.  
JOHN YOUNG

Left:

As reported last month, Dualway of Rathcoole has been operating one of the Volvo B7TL/Plaxton President demonstrators previously with Dublin Bus.  
DARREN HALL

Below left:

Bus Eireann has begun operating its Wright Cadet-bodied DAF SB120CS midibuses at Limerick. This is DWM8 (00 D 96294).  
DARREN HALL



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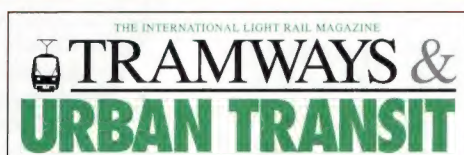
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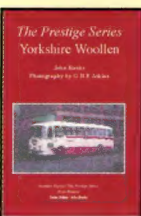
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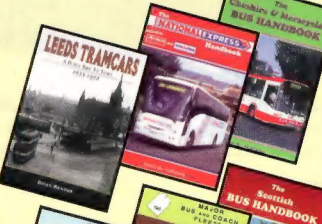
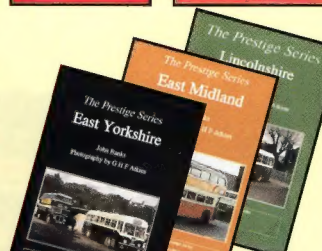
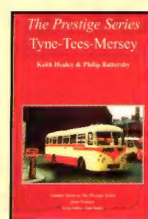
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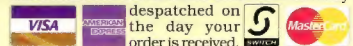
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## 18606 Bristol VR III CUMBERLAND LAKELAND EXPERIENCE

In this attractive livery fleet number 2038 registered UWV 6205 is carrying visitors on route to Ambleside.



## 15627A RM Routemaster THE DELAINE

In this distinctive livery, Routemaster RM2059 registered ALM 598 is on route 102 to Deeping St. James and celebrates the 110th anniversary of The Delaine.



## 27502 Wrights Scania Axxess EASTERN NATIONAL

The first standard release of our new Wrights Scania Axxess Floline features the fleet number 654, registered T654 SSF on the Centurion branded route 65 to Tollgate Sainsburys via Town Centre.

These two Leyland TD1 Titans below have been produced for members of our Subscribers Service only. Details are available from the address below.



## 27203A Leyland TD1 BIRKENHEAD CORPORATION

This Birkenhead model is in the attractive tramcar replacement livery, and features fleet number 90, registered CM 8075 on route to Moreton Shore.

# NEW RELEASES FOR DEC 2000

1:76 Scale/00 gauge precision diecast models



## 27301 Leyland TD1 closed back RIBBLE

The first release of our closed rear version features Ribble's Titan, registered CK 4271 on route 154 to Blackpool.



## 17302 Leyland National MKI ISLE OF MAN

Building on our fleet of Isle of Man vehicles is fleet number 14, registered MAN 14A, featured on route 15 to Ramsey.



## 20125 Bedford OB Coach EDINBURGH CORPORATION

In the attractive Maddar and White livery, fleet number X24 registered GWS 468 is on City Tour route 6.



## 27201A Leyland TD1 BOLTON TRANSPORT

This attractive model of the preserved Bolton vehicle, fleet number 53, housed at the Lincolnshire Road Transport Museum, registered WH 1553, is featured on route to Plodder Lane.

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